Fox Photo

Rudolf Hess and other leaders of the German National Socialist Party in the dock at Nuremberg.

PRISONER OF PEACE

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PRISONER OF PEACE

Translated from the German of
FRAU ILSE HESS
ENGLAND-NURNBERG-SPANDAU

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Foreword to the English Edition
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"Reflecting upon the whole of this story, I am glad not to be responsible for the way in which Hess has been and is being treated.... He came to us of his own free will, and, so without authority, had, something of the quality of an envoy."

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

The Second World War [*Vol. III*]

FOREWORD

by

AIR-COMMODORE G. S. ODDIE

D.F.C., A.F.C.

THE secrecy with which the Hess Mission was immediately surrounded and subsequently maintained must have been and must still be a source of anxious speculation for those having the courage to face the realities of this age. An age in which the forces of evil, borne along on the perverted use of Christian phraseology seem to be accelerating the world towards final catastrophe. That secrecy was maintained throughout the war years and has been guarded ever since by the imprisonment of Rudolf Hess.

It is well nigh impossible for the ordinary citizen to become sufficiently acquainted with facts to judge a case. He does know however, that secrecy has never been and will never be a weapon of Good while more often than not it is the distinguishing mark of Evil.

Readers will for the first time in twelve years be given some light on this mission, even though unfortunately it is only such light as is allowed to filter through prison bars or by permission of the censor.

If the reader will remember to take himself out of his own environment and age and place himself in that of an historian of the future, he will find this book is essentially a very human story of a man, who while holding an important position of trust is driven by an inner urge and guided by his own code of honour to undertake a

secret and personal peace mission. A mission moreover, which he believed to have the undeclared approval of his Chief.

The act itself required great moral and physical courage, careful planning and, for one not then actively engaged in flying, considerable skill in execution. If some readers think that the planning of such a solo mission indicates a naïvety incompatible with one in Hess's position, they should remember that the German National Socialist Party was composed for the most part of men of action and not of trained diplomats. His Mission was effective enough to warrant the clamping down of immediate secrecy and complete subsequent suppression as to its real nature. This suppression included a denial of his right of self defence at his trial.

The personal letters passing between Rudolf Hess and his wife, attached to this brief account of the Mission, are very necessary as giving a picture of his character and thoughts. It would be very difficult indeed to picture from them a man either puffed with conceit or working out a cunningly conceived plan that failed. It is far easier to picture from these letters a courageous and genuine idealist, misguided or not, according to one's views, but buoyed up with hope, which would certainly have been quite impossible to a worldly wise diplomat.

The possibilities, which lay behind this last minute attempt at a reconciliation between Great Britain and Germany were so immense, that one is driven to weigh up the probabilities of the genuineness of the Mission on the one hand and the reaction of our side on the other. The Hess story seems to fit, while that of his accusers does not.

Thoughtful readers will no doubt ponder the significance of the rather sad comment of Hess in one of his letters from prison—"I had not realized that Churchill had become powerless to prevent the catastrophe from enveloping us."

This powerlessness of National Rulers seems to embrace not only the tragedy of Hess and his peace mission, but

also the imminent and planned slide of our World into chaos.

Such publications as this book, if widely read, would help to open the eyes of the public, while there is yet time.

G. S. Oddie.

Rudolf Hess, the deputy Führer of National Socialist Germany landed in Scotland on the 11th May, 1941. He was sentenced at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg on the 1st October, 1946, to life-long imprisonment.

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FATE can play very strange tricks: When Rudolf Hess, in May, 1941, undertook his famous flight to Scotland, a number of different possibilities lay in this world-political adventure. My husband's machine might come down over the North Sea; a parachute jump might end fatally; it was also possible he would reach his destination safely; and it was not out of the question for his self-appointed mission to succeed. Furthermore, he might be successful with the British Government, only to be sent back to Germany with a flag of truce and then shot in his own country for his independent action.

None of these things happened. But what was, in 1941, the unimaginable did. The man who was so completely obsessed by the idea of bringing about peace and ending the Second World War that he gave up his position as German Minister of State and Stellvertreter of the Führer, and was ready to sacrifice life itself, ended as a political prisoner—these twelve years, first in England and now in Germany.

Accordingly, I propose to offer these pages as a document to be placed before those who still keep my husband in prison. I also offer them as a greeting to all those who take a human interest in the fate of Rudolf Hess.

ILSE HESS

Gailenberg, September, 1952.

INTRODUCTION

IN loneliness and silence Rudolf Hess entered upon the path that was to lead him to four years of detention under the British, to his appearance in the dock at Nuremberg and, finally, to a long imprisonment within the walls of the fortress of Spandau.

He prepared for the greatest adventure of his life with an intense concentration and quiet persistence that was characteristic of the whole man.

Nobody ever believed me when I said that, even as late as May, 1941, I had not the faintest notion of his real purpose. The German secret police questioned all his friends and relations, his adjutants, members of his staff; and, of course, his wife—they did not believe me! At a later date, the officers, officials, and journalists of the armies of occupation proved to be equally incredulous.

I admit, however, that it was no secret to me and others around him that he was engaged in planning something out of the ordinary. He was extremely busy with all sorts of activities, and his state of tension was visible. Boxes were packed and then unpacked. At the Messerschmitt works at Augsburg he repeatedly flew with an Me 110, by way (so he said) of "recreation". His silence alone, however, would not have impressed me, for since our marriage in 1927 an unwritten law existed that private and public affairs were to be kept strictly apart. My husband despised men in public office who could not "keep their mouths shut at home", and it was not my way to ask questions if he said nothing.

But as time passed it became clear to me that his increasingly frequent journeys to Augsburg could hardly be explained as recreation, as mere distraction from the cares of office. One day I was waiting by myself in my husband's office, and a voice filled with matter-of-fact conviction, and evidently conveying some expected message, gave me a weather report for some mysterious places

referred to as X and Y. Rather astonished, I jotted down this, to me, quite incomprehensible message. But I noticed from the confused manner of the secretary, who had just come in, that this was something I was not supposed to know anything about! However, she must have told my husband; for, from that day onwards, I frequently took down such reports—sometimes by actual request. It was now presumed, so I thought, that they had acquired an innocent appearance to my mind.

I said nothing, but I was far from being convinced of the innocuous nature of whatever my husband was "up to" at this time. Reasoning from my knowledge of the political events of the period, I worked out an explanation of my own. Following upon the German victory in France there had been attempts on both sides to replace the vague state of "armistice", existing between France and Germany, by a genuine peace. In the early winter of 1940 the so-called "policy of Montoire" which, since the meeting of Hitler and Pétain in that little town, had grown to be a source of hope for many French and German people (including my husband) had suffered shipwreck, from various external causes. My husband, who spoke perfect French from childhood, had a deep respect for the old Marshal of France, his one-time opponent at Verdun. It was a feeling based upon Rudolf Hess's strong sense of what was due in a chivalrous and soldierly attitude. What could be more natural than I should get the idea that he had been called upon to make a further attempt, in some new and impressive way, to reach a lasting peace with France?

Gradually the notion of a "flight to Pétain" strengthened into a near conviction; it seemed to explain all the odd things going on around me. In May, 1945, when I told this to the French officers of the occupation army who interviewed me, at first they adopted a tone of astonished incredulity mixed with anger. But, after further consideration, they did not entirely reject my explanation.

True—the Messerschmitt 'plane did not start off in the direction of Vichy in May, 1941, but, according to the first statements made by my husband to the Home

Secretary (Lord Simon) after his arrival in England, there was much that did "tie in" with my ideas; for he himself related that his plan for flying to England as a "self-appointed bearer of the flag of truce" was born during the last days of the German campaign in France in 1940.[1]

It is not generally known that it was my husband who, before the signing of the armistice terms in the historic

[1] The following is an abridged account of the statement made by Hess to Lord Simon on 9th June, 1941, as given officially:

"My coming to England in this way is, as I realize, so unusual that nobody will easily understand it. I first thought of this plan in France in June last year. I admit that, when I saw the Führer at that time, I was convinced, as we all were, that sooner or later we should be victorious over England. In discussing the position with the Führer, I expressed the view that we should as a matter of course demand from England the return of what was taken from us by the Versailles treaty (such as the value of our trading fleet). But Hitler immediately contradicted me. He believed that the war could give rise to an opportunity to come, at last, to a real understanding with England, such as he had himself desired ever since he began his political career. I can bear witness to the fact that ever since I knew Hitler (from 1921 onwards) he had always spoken of the necessity of coming to an understanding with England, and said that as soon as he came into power he would aim at doing this. He told me then, in France, that in his opinion no hard conditions should be imposed in case of victory over a land with which an understanding was desired. I thought that if this were only realized in England it might be possible that a desire for understanding would develop in England also. After the end of the war in France, Hitler made an offer to reach an understanding with England; but this was turned down. This served to make me more sure than ever that my plan must be put into practice.

"Then there were acts of war between England and Germany, in the course of which the former suffered more damage than did Germany; so that I felt England could not give way without suffering a severe loss of prestige. I then said to myself: 'This is the moment when your plan must really be carried out, for if you are over in England this might prove an occasion for England to enter into discussions, without loss of prestige.' It was my opinion that, apart from the conditions necessary for an understanding, there was a certain general mistrust to be overcome. I was confronted by a very hard decision. I do not think I could have arrived at my final choice unless I had continually kept before my eyes the vision of an endless line of children's coffins with weeping mothers behind them, both English and German; and another line of coffins of mothers with mourning children."

railway coach at Compiègne, urged upon Hitler in a long and earnest discussion the unwisdom of forcing any terms that might offend the honour of a defeated enemy and thus might tend to bar the way to a lasting understanding between the two nations. It was only after assurance on this that he withdrew his original refusal to be present at Compiègne.

Hölderlin said: "Never sacrifice your conscience on the altar of expediency!" This was the guiding principle of my husband's attitude towards the Second World War. He took his stand as an old front-line soldier. In this role he made his passionate appeals to all his comrades of the First World War—German, French or English—his words finding a lasting echo. He saw clearly that a new war would be a disaster for Europe and for the whole world. When the die was cast and the war machine had started on its course, he devoted himself wholly to doing all that lay within his field to bring about a German victory as speedily as possible and with a minimum of bloodshed. For he saw in this victory the best means of ending, once and for all, centuries of fruitless strife and destruction, and of initiating a new era of prolonged peace between the nations, on a basis of equality.

From the first day of the war his innermost thoughts were steadfastly directed towards the speediest possible conclusion of such a peace. After the French collapse, when England remained the sole enemy, he tried first through Albrecht Haushofer (the son of his best friend, the geo-politician, Dr. Karl Haushofer), and with the knowledge of Adolf Hitler, to get into touch with leading English circles. It was then discovered that the establishment of such connections via Spain or Switzerland was a lengthy and troublesome business, while the prospects of tangible results seemed to diminish.[1] Thus it came about

[1] Albrecht Haushofer was arrested in May, 1941, but soon released because it was proved beyond doubt that his attempts to establish contact through Geneva and Madrid had taken place with the knowledge of Hitler. Ulrich von Hassel asserted in his book *Vom anderen Deutschland* that Haushofer had practised a two-faced game—"outwardly for Hess, but really for the resistance movement". There is no support elsewhere for this assertion. Haushofer was, however,

that my husband gradually formed the notion of softening the irreconcilably hostile attitude of the British by some unusual and dramatic act. In a letter to Albrecht Haushofer, which he left behind him in May, 1941, he wrote that in his view there remained only one possibility: "to cut the Gordian knot of this unhappy entanglement!"

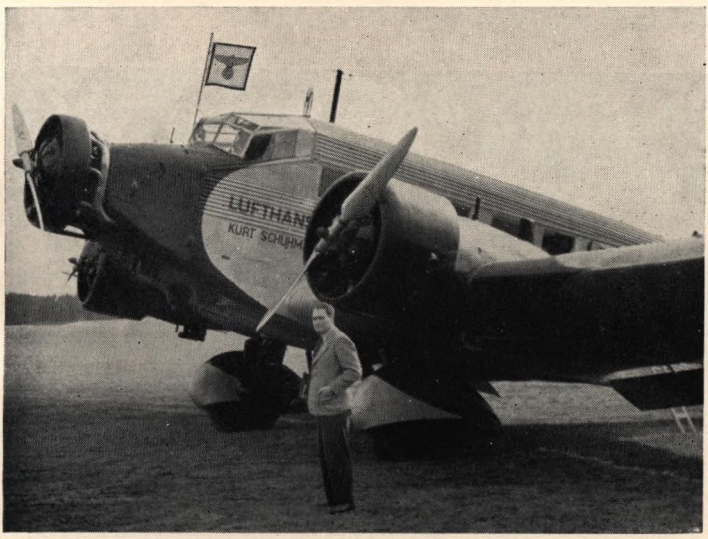
This plan could not take any actual form until the early autumn of 1940 because, until September of that year, my husband's hands were tied by a pledge which he had given—most unwillingly—to Hitler on the outbreak of war, namely, not to fly again! As a Flight Officer of the First World War he had pleaded to be sent to the front with the Air Force. This was refused and Hitler, who knew better than most people the perseverance and obstinacy of his Stellvertreter when he had a goal in view, insisted upon having his word of honour that he would not fly again. He knew that a Hess would never break his word; but he overlooked the fact that my husband had managed, in formulating his pledge, to insert a clause limiting the period of abstention from flying to one year! This he did in 1939 in the hope of being able to go to the front when the time expired. One year later, he awaited the moment when he would be free from his pledge with the growing, if still vague, notion of some personal action that would take him far beyond the front lines.

Once free of his promise, my husband began his efforts to familiarize himself with the then most modern type of pursuit aircraft, the Me 110. His first attempt was at the Templehof aerodrome in Berlin, through Udet, then quarter-master general to the Air Force. But the latter would do nothing without the express permission of Adolf Hitler. My husband then turned to Professor Messerschmitt in Augsburg, and there he was able to begin his practise flights without any difficulties or conditions. Both Messerschmitt and his technical director Croneiss—himself a flyer and a friend of my husband's since the end

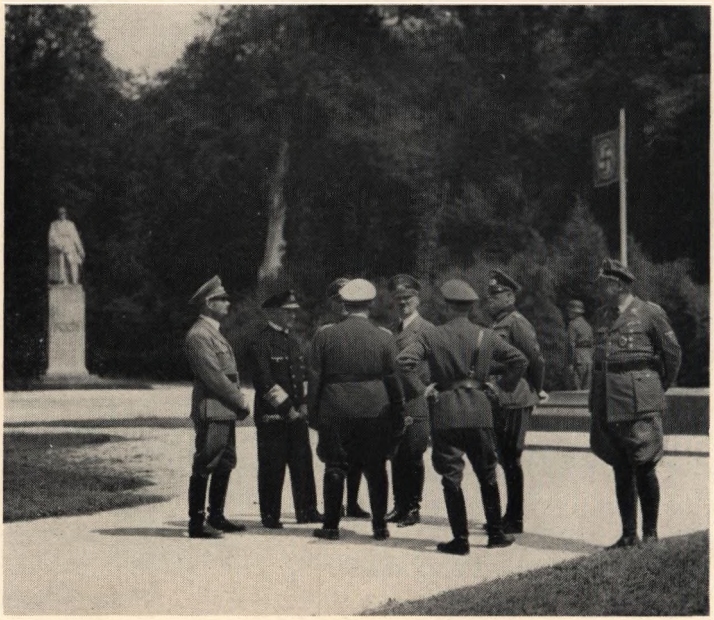
arrested again in 1944 on suspicion of being concerned in the 20th of July Movement; but his case never came before the courts, because at the end of April, 1945, he was shot without trial in a Berlin prison, just before the Russians entered the city.

HESS THE AIRMAN

Above: First World War.
Below: Just before the outbreak of the Second World War.



Photos: Ilse Hess



HESS IN FRANCE, 1940

Above: With Hitler and the German High Command at Compiègne. The statue of Foch can be seen on the left.

Below: Visiting the Soldiers' cemetery.

Photos: Ilse Hess

of the First World War—had long been accustomed to his passion for the air and his special interest in the Messerschmitt machines and their development; they found nothing suspicious in his frequent visits and interest in the Me 110 and his request to be allowed to use the machine as a "form of recreation". Professor Messerschmitt and Croneiss who died some years ago, shook their heads when they told me, after my husband's flight, how cunning he had been when he combined his "recreational flights" with suggestions of a critical nature designed to prompt the engineer in charge to carry out certain alterations making the machine more suitable for the long distance trip that he had in view! The Me 110 was intended for two men, but he managed to get parts built which made it a one man machine suitable for his purpose. He criticized, with a frown, the too limited range of the machine, much to the displeasure of Messerschmitt who, however, allowed himself thus to be tricked into fitting two auxiliary tanks of 700 litres each in the wings!

Fearing, however, that even the trustful and patient heads of the Messerschmitt works might find the all-too-frequent "recreational" flights somewhat remarkable, he let drop now and then hints of a flight on national service over Norway. After 1945, Professor Messerschmitt (who is quoted at length in the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* of May, 1947),[1] suggested humorously that no one at Augsburg doubted the statements made by a Minister of State.

[1] In May, 1947, the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* published an interview with Willy Messerschmitt, the famous German aeronautical engineer, in which he elaborated some points dealing with the Hess flight.

In the autumn of 1940, Hess approached him with a request to try out some types of up-to-date pursuit planes. At first Messerschmitt was unwilling to do this, but, when Hess exerted his authority as *Stellvertreter*, he gave and permitted him to try Me 110 machines. Messerschmitt described Hess as an outstandingly excellent pilot. He made some twenty flights. After each flight he pointed out alleged defects, maintaining that the machines were not suitable for prolonged flights and asking for alterations to be tried, such as fitting extra tanks and radio equipment, until at last he got a machine he thought suitable.

On 10th May, 1941, Hess started off from Augsburg for Stavanger in order—said Messerschmitt—to join up with a German bomber

Thus the autumn and winter months of 1940–41 slipped past. With a regularity that was almost soothing, daily weather reports from the mysterious places known as X and Y arrived in Berlin or Munich. Once or twice a week my husband drove to Augsburg to practise flying. Contrary to the strict regulations of war time a new leather flying suit was acquired, much admired by our little boy and a cause of some astonishment to me! At the same time, in a manner equally contrary to the otherwise strictly observed war regulations, a large brand-new radio apparatus appeared in the work-room of our home in Harlaching and was used behind closed double-doors. It could not have been a case of listening in to foreign stations, because my husband received this news in written form from the official listening-in sources. On one occasion, moved by an understandable womanly curiosity, I looked at the dial to see where it was tuned in and found it was Kalundborg. This was far from supporting my Pétain thesis—but, after all, what was the significance of a reading that might have been accidental?

squadron going to the British Isles. At ten o'clock that evening Goering telephoned in an excited manner and demanded an interview with Messerschmitt in Munich. This took place the next morning. "Goering pointed his baton at me", said Messerschmitt, "and shouted: 'As far as you are concerned, I suppose anybody can come and fly off with one of your machines!' I pointed out that Hess was not'anybody', but was the *Stellvertreter*. 'You should have known, that this man was crazy.' I replied drily: 'How could I be expected to suppose that one so high in the hierarchy of the Third Reich could be crazy? If that were the case, Herr Reichsmarschall, you should have procured his resignation!' Goering thereupon roared with laughter and exclaimed: 'Messerschmitt, you are quite incurable! Go back to your factory and get on with your construction. I will help you out of the mess, if the Führer shall seek to make trouble for you.' "

This interview was sent to my husband at Nuremberg, and he wrote to me, saying that Messerschmitt's report had caused him much amusement—although he was off the mark in some respects. "I most certainly did not fly to Norway with the idea of joining some squadron; I flew *direct*—save for some diversions made with the object of deceiving the English, in which aim I was successful."

The account of this interview contains also other errors, for Messerschmitt could not have heard from Goering before Sunday, May the 11th, at the earliest. *Note by Ilse Hess.*

Our friend Croneiss told me after the flight had taken place that, as my husband had not been able to make use of any official guiding signals, he took to using the interval signals from Kalundborg and, during the weeks when he made his preparatory flights, he had persuaded the head of the Kalundborg station, for some innocent reason he supplied, to broadcast a favourite melody at stated intervals. The fact that the Kalundborg station was thus drawn into the plan gave rise, after 1945, to the presumption that my husband had really flown first to Norway and thence under the protection of a German bomber squadron to Scotland. In reality he flew quite alone, and at that time Croneiss told me again and again what a very considerable achievement the purely navigational side of this flight must have been.

What caused me more surprise than almost anything else during those last weeks was the astonishing amount of time—and that in the middle of the war—that my husband spent with our son. This ran into long hours by the Isar, lengthy visits to the nearby Zoo at Hellabrunn and mysterious games behind the closed doors of the workroom. All this seemed to me inexplicable in those earnest times. How different it was to look back on, knowing the circumstances and seeing how everything fell into place! Those hours with the innocent child were the last short moments of inward rest in the long silent tense weeks of preparation and the storing up of nervous energy for a deed which—whatever its consequences—must alter the whole course of his life. There must have been also the clear consciousness—borne in silence and some bitterness —of the fact that his venture might rob him of ever again enjoying the care-free laughter of children.

* * * *

On the 10th of May, 1941, as I was not feeling well, I did not come down to lunch, though we had Alfred Rosenberg as guest at the unusually early hour of twelve. My husband had given clear instructions that this brief meal time should not be disturbed, even by the household staff.

As I remember, it would have been soon after one o'clock when Rosenberg drove off and my husband came up to say he wanted to rest a short time, and asked if he could take tea with me at our usual hour of 2.30 in the bedroom.

He arrived for his tea, having changed his clothes and, much to my surprise, was wearing bluish-grey breeches and high airman's boots, most unusual! Casually he remarked that he had received a call from Berlin in the meantime and would be making a short detour to Augsburg on his way to headquarters. I was even more astonished to see he had on a light blue shirt with a dark blue tie, a colour combination I had so often advocated without the slightest effect! The full significance of this did not dawn until after the flight, when I was being questioned about the clothes my husband was wearing when I last saw him. As I described the breeches, shirt and the rest my questioner gave a sigh of relief, exclaiming, "Thank God he wore the uniform of an officer of the Luftwaffe. Whatever they may do to him over there, at any rate they cannot shoot him as a spy!" I could say nothing as to his insignia of rank, but later in looking through his papers we found a bill (unfortunately not paid) from a military tailor in Munich, for the uniform of a captain in the Luftwaffe. But the name of the customer (who was at the same time the debtor) had been carefully cut away.

The reader may think that these small events preliminary to a great and tragic venture are of very minor importance, but they demonstrate the minute care which my husband devoted to each stage of preparation and to each thing needed. Such a degree of attention and accuracy demanded an almost superhuman self-discipline.

When I asked him the meaning of the blue shirt, he smiled and gave the charming explanation: "To give you a pleasant surprise!" What, I wonder, did he *really* think and feel a couple of hours before he took off on his flight to England? We can only conjecture. I can see my husband standing there before me as if it were yesterday. And I remember so clearly how doubtfully I received this

surprising piece of matrimonial gallantry. Tea over, he kissed my hand and stood at the door of the nursery, grown suddenly very grave, with the air of one deep in thought and almost hesitating.

"When will you be coming back?"

"I am not quite certain, perhaps to-morrow; but I should certainly be home by Monday evening."

I did not believe him—and I said so. Writing later from England, he told me that he turned hot and cold by turns when he heard me say:

"What? To-morrow? Or Monday? I cannot believe it. You will not come back as soon as that!"

Very quickly he dashed out to take leave (so he told me in this letter) of his small son, sleeping after his meal; afraid if he stayed longer I would say more or reveal that I *knew more.* All that I did think, however, was that sooner or later I should receive a letter or a ring from Vichy.

That was our parting—for a separation of nearly twelve years. Eight months were to go by until, in January, '42, his first letter from England re-built the mental bridge so roughly torn down by fate.

* * * *

The sound of the car taking my husband to Augsburg for the last time, died away in the distance and the day passed like any other. The next two days, Sunday and Monday, at our home in Harlaching we knew absolutely nothing of what had happened, although excited discussions took place on the Obersalzberg and instructions were given to listen in to all the British transmitters in case anything about my husband should come through. The doubt which on the day of our parting I had felt about his early return grew stronger.

On the Monday evening (12th May), we had arranged for a show in our little cinema at home, and now feeling better, I put on some house clothes and went down. What the film was about I cannot remember, for it had barely started when I was called away. At the back of the big room where our audience—our little entourage of adjutants, chauffeurs and servants—was assembled, I saw

there was some kind of disturbance and there I found my husband's youngest adjutant in a distraught state standing by the door. Politely but earnestly, he begged me to "put on my things", meaning slightly more formal clothes—a request which, from the confused and excited manner in which it was made, seemed to me senseless. Then a swift dread crossed my mind and I cried:

"Something has happened to my husband!"

It was some time before I could gather that somebody—not anyone in the room there—had heard over the German radio that "The former Stellvertreter of the Führer has come down while flying over the North Sea, and is presumed dead".

I can still remember replying, "Nonsense!" in an angry tone to the white faced adjutant. Not for one second did I believe anything really tragic had happened. In moments of extreme spiritual tension there comes to us, from regions lying outside the field of reason, a knowledge that will not let us be deceived.

I then did what I had never done before, for with us public affairs and private interests were kept apart. I demanded a call to Obersalzberg "on State affairs"; and asked for a first priority call.

While waiting for the call, I learned more of the report on the radio which had caused alarm and agitation in every German home. The manner in which this report referred to "mental aberration", the reference to alleged "breach of faith" over the pledge not to fly again—these aroused a passionate resentment in me, as may well be imagined. I had fully intended to speak to the Führer and give him a piece of my mind. But I was unable to make that contact, and after much hither and thither I found myself at last speaking to the then Reichsleiter Bormann, who told me he knew absolutely nothing. This turned out to be true, but I did not at the time accept his word. I admit I hardly let him open his mouth, but expressed my indignation with an emphasis and a rhetoric I had never employed before or since in that quarter. Bormann promised to arrange for me to receive an early visit from a Ministry official. Quite exhausted, if not soothed, I

brought my one and only first-priority State 'phone call to an end.

I then got through to my husband's brother in Berlin. Alfred Hess, like myself, did not accept the report of his brother's death; and this helped—for, in spite of my own confidence, I was not without the need of being comforted. Two close friends came to visit and offer their help, but they knew no more than I did—only what they had heard on the radio—and then long after midnight, Dr. H., the promised Ministry Official, arrived. My hope that he would be able to enlighten me was bitterly disappointed. It seemed that at Obersalzberg they expected *me* to enlighten them! For the first time I found myself face to face with one of those incredulous persons who refused to accept my statement that I knew nothing of my husband's plans. I insisted to the dumbfounded Dr. H. that all members of "the Hess Staff" should know their chief well enough to feel sure that he would never discuss State secrets with his wife. The term "State secrets" produced a powerful reaction. Up to this point, the emissary had been somewhat confused but, if a little pale, had remained polite and not unfriendly; but now he turned to ice and informed me that if a single word of what I (supposedly) knew should leak out, I would be arrested. He then turned on his heel and left the room.

To-day I cannot recollect all the endless things we discussed, conjectured, pondered over, or rejected as absurd during that long night. Three times we listened in to repetitions of the original announcement—each time slightly altered—yet in the end remaining much the same. We disbelieved it entirely. But what *should* we believe? We rejected the idea of death. Later I discovered that Adolf Hitler contradicted everyone who expressed the opinion that Hess must have come down—and this fact is mentioned more than once in the letters. But he, too, could do no more than conjecture; for the British Government had shut down strictly on all news bearing on the affair. In reality, Obersalzberg knew no more than I did of what had actually taken place when the German radio issued its first statement. The only real fact was that an Me 110 had

left German territory, unannounced, nearly two days ago, going in the direction of the North Sea. Further, Hitler had received on Sunday, 11th May, a letter left for him by my husband, in which the latter explained his purpose. But for two days nobody in Germany knew what had happened to the writer of the letter.

All the same, it was incomprehensible to me that my husband's fatherly old friend, Professor Karl Haushofer, when he came to see me on the 13th of May, should be fully convinced that my husband was dead. He saw further than I did into the real meaning of things, because he had been told by his son, Albrecht, about the preparations for negotiating through Geneva and Madrid. And, since these feelers were without a doubt extended with the knowledge of Hitler, Haushofer—contrary to my own conviction—persisted in the view, right up to the day of the trials in Nuremberg when his evidence was taken, that Hitler had "dispatched" my husband, or as he maliciously put it "sacrificed him".

The old man was deeply shaken and filled with despair over the death, as he supposed, of his old friend, and after he had gone away I felt that, for the first time since the fateful evening, I was utterly exhausted. It seemed that the whole world, hitherto firmly established, had collapsed about me. The only real thing in this silent phantom-like process of disintegration was my little boy. I took him in my arms and instantly fell into a deep sleep. Perhaps I slept for hours before an excited hubbub and cries of joy ringing through the house awakened me. The second bulletin, telling of my husband's safe landing in Scotland, taken from the English news, had just come through on the Munich radio.

Our spirits soared, at least for a while, to almost excessive heights. The disintegrating world seemed to piece itself together again! Rudolf Hess *alive*—even in a place like Scotland, so improbable to us at this time—was a fact that protected us against all doubts and untruths.

It could not, however, save us from its consequences. The little world that had hitherto belonged to us became a magician's circle enclosing us and preventing our return

to the old ties. Adjutants, orderlies, secretaries and chauffeurs, my brother-in-law, Alfred Hess, together with Albrecht Haushofer, were all arrested; some of them vanished for years into concentration camps, and were not set free until 1943 and '44. All of us ceased to be members of a group and became objects of arbitrary control. It was indeed a bitter draught we had to swallow day after day, week after week, year after year!

Yet we were protected by our remoteness; none could hold any communication with us. We knew Rudolf Hess, knew his attitude, his mode of thought, his unshakable principles of honour and loyalty, of duty and courage.

In the winter of 1940–41, I had once asked my husband about the conditions attaching to the award of the Bavarian Max Josef Order and the Austrian Maria Theresa Order. To my astonishment, he replied in a very serious manner:

"Both these decorations are given only for acts of bravery carried out on personal initiative. In the case of the Maria Theresa Order something further is required: if one acts independently on one's own responsibility in a manner directly *contrary* to what has been clearly commanded by one's superiors, and the action is successful *then* one gets the Order—but if one is so unlucky as to fail, then one gets shot!"

It was not until a long time after his flight that I recollected this explanation and the quite remarkable gravity with which it had been given, and realized, with a shock how clearly he had thought on the possible ultimate results of his action.

* * * *

My husband's mouth is closed. He cannot utter the decisive final words about his deed.

On my part, however, I have certain knowledge that my husband desired to make a personal sacrifice without being ordered to do so, without any knowledge of this act so far as Hitler was concerned, and with a clear mind and free will. His motive force and governing idea was simply and solely *peace.*

The fact that he acted without the knowledge of the man to whom he felt himself to be pledged does not exclude a firm conviction on his part that he was acting in accordance with this man's feelings in the matter. A few days before he went on his flight he had satisfied himself, in the course of a lengthy and excited discussion with Hitler in the Chancellory, that the latter—not as previously—was ready, even at the cost of a loss of prestige, to make peace with England. This in spite of a renewed clash in the recently concluded Balkan campaign.

In an endeavour to find out for myself the *real*, and not merely the officially announced, view of Hitler concerning my husband's action, I visited the widow of the Munich publisher, Hugo Bruckmann, Frau Elsa Bruckmann, in the spring of 1942. I had discovered that she had received a visit of condolence within the last few days from Adolf Hitler. If he had spoken openly to anyone it would have been to her.

It turned out that my supposition was correct, and I was told a very curious story. Frau Bruckmann was a highly gifted artistic person, and Hitler found her occupied over designs for a proposed family burial place; and one can well imagine that contemplating the sudden end of a long and unusually happy marriage had reduced her to a most sorrowful state of mind. I was told by Frau Bruckmann that Hitler placed his hand thoughtfully upon the gravestone saying:

"We all have our graves and grow more and more lonely, but we have to overcome and go on living, my dear gracious lady! I, too, am now deprived of the only two human beings among all those around me to whom I have been truly and inwardly attached: Dr. Todt is dead and Hess has flown away from me!"

Frau Bruckmann had never been afraid of expressing her opinion bluntly to the Head of the State, even when it differed very widely from his own; she answered spiritedly:

"That is what you say now and to me, but what does your official Press say? Year after year we all go to Bayreuth and are deeply moved, but who understands the

real meaning? When our unhappy age at last produces a man who, like the Valkyrie, fulfils the deeper meaning of Wotan's command—seeks to carry out YOUR most sacred wish with heroism and self-sacrifice—then he is described as insane!"

Frau Bruckmann paused. Would Hitler be indignant and go? Had she ventured too far? But he remained quiet and thoughtful. Then he said: "Is it not enough, what I have said to you—and to you alone—about my real feeling? Is that not enough for you?"

* * * *

I have actually had a copy of the letter my husband left for Hitler, although I do not possess it now. I found it when searching for a letter left for me, which incidentally had been seized;[1] and I lost it in 1945 when nearly all my correspondence of those years went. But I remember perfectly that it was the furtherance of Hitler's old idea of an alliance with England and the consequent pacification of Europe which occupied the central place in my husband's letter to him. The final sentence remains almost word perfect in my mind: "And if, my Führer, this project—which I admit has but very small chance of success—ends in failure and the fates decide against me, this can have no detrimental results either for you or for Germany: it will always be possible for you to deny all responsibility. Simply say I was *crazy*."

It is thus clear that it was my husband *himself* who

[1] After some months I obtained a copy of my confiscated letter: it was a brief greeting with the remark that now, at last, I would understand the meaning of the mysterious X and Y that had long played a large part in our lives. Enclosed was his will and a letter for his parents and brother. There were also letters for Albrecht Haushofer; for the Reichsfuhrer of the S.S. with the request—made in vain—that none of his men, who had known nothing of his plans, should in any way suffer for his action; and for a certain man in the Messerschmitt works, whose flying outfit he had borrowed whilst his own was being repaired, and which he had no alternative but to take with him when favourable weather reports unexpectedly made him decide in the middle of the day of 10th May to start his flight forthwith. On two previous occasions the start had been put off—once because of bad weather, and again because of a defect in the engines.

provided the operative word—the word used in the first German radio announcement about the flight—which led by degrees to an unending chain of reactions, to a flood of conjectures and suppositions about his mental state. He played a game of leg-pulling with eth doctors in England, for reasons which are disclosed in his letters. Later, he fooled the Nuremberg psychiatrists and kept his guards at Spandau puzzled.[1] The letters he wrote and still writes to me remove the last veil from this camouflage. It was not the folly of a dreamer, but the passion of one genuinely convinced of the necessity of peace that drove Rudolf Hess.

The "indiscretion which sometimes serves us well", as my husband quoted years afterwards when referring in a vein of philosophical humour to his flight in 1941, finds an interesting parallel in a little episode related by Sven Hedin in his book *Ohne Auftrag in Berlin.* For the episode seems to indicate that it was not wholly a delusion of the German mind which led Hess to expect to find a chivalrous and sporting attitude in England. On the contrary it is actually possible for the Anglo-Saxon mentality also to harbour such illusions. Sven Hedin relates:

[1] In 1951 the paper *Die Gegenwart,* in an article entitled "The Cells of Nuremberg" reported on the test methods of modern psychiatry and their application during the trials at Nuremberg:

"... One must have many reservations concerning the psychiatrists who proceeded in the most roundabout fashion.... A lot of experiments of this sort were witnessed during the Nuremberg proceedings, and while it is understandable that scientists should swear by their own methods, they do so in a manner so naïve as to suggest they are ignorant of the ever changing opinions in their own ranks. For example the psychiatrist of to-day gives his subject ten pieces of paper, each with one blot of ink which in every case will be of a different size or colour; and the patient is asked to describe the blots. Are we to suppose that science did not know what to go upon before the invention of this test? However that may be, we cannot avoid thinking that Hess—to put it mildly—gave these gallant fellows rather an easy job when he pointed quite willingly to one of these blots, saying he could see two men 'talking about a crime and thinking of blood'. In the case of the ninth piece of paper, he claimed to see 'a section of a flowing fountain'. Even the psychiatrist himself perceived something peculiar about this reply. . ..."

"On the 30th of September I was visited by a young English business man engaged in trade with Finland. In his view a war between England and Germany would be sheer insanity, a crazy act that would plunge both countries into ruin. He had a most original idea: he wanted to travel to Berlin so that he could talk to Hitler, and he wanted me to open the way to this talk. Once in the presence of Hitler, he intended to say: 'Fly over to London, appear personally before the ministers and say how stupid and irresponsible it is to fight one another. Offer to shake hands and come to a reasonable agreement.' Asked, what if the English were to arrest Hitler and keep him until the end of the war, the young man replied: 'Never! The English ministers are good sportsmen. They would be impressed by Hitler's courage; they would hurry to shake his hand and lose no time in drawing up plans for a peaceful settlement'. . . ."

"Never sacrifice your conscience on the altar of expediency." I should like to place these words of Hölderlins even above my husband's motto of "inspired indiscretion", which also shows much deep thought.

A German from overseas who had followed European events closely for many years, once wrote the following words which, in my view, show a truly penetrating understanding of my husband's mind: "The heroic attempt of May, 1941, came to grief, not because Hess was too ignorant to realize his own political innocence or grasp the broad relationships and manifold complexities of high politics, but because of the lack of high intelligence among the leaders of British policy, a lack arising from too narrow and too self-centred an outlook. It was the hope of Rudolf Hess that he might be able to arouse these men to a higher and nobler vision."

He sought—I might almost say, with an airman's bold stroke—to capture this citadel of misunderstanding, ignorance and error. Fate robbed him of success. England was already irretrievably committed to a policy that allowed of no retreat. The people rushed down the slope leading to total war at a speed even greater than my husband had feared.

What remains? It is the memory of a bold carefree act that was doomed to fail. The wisdom of our age does not accept the ideal of peace; it believes in hardness of heart

and revenge. A sentence of imprisonment for life is the fate of a man who found the courage to take up arms against this wisdom.

There remain also letters. Many of them contain things that will interest others besides myself. They reflect a destiny typical of our age.

THE FLIGHT

Between May and July, 1947, restrictions were considerably relaxed governing the correspondence of the Nuremberg prisoners awaiting transfer to Spandau. Extracts from the letters I received from my husband during those few weeks are here pieced together to make a continuous story in his own words of the events of the night of 10th and 11th May, 1941. The remaining chapters comprise a series of his letters mostly to me from his days in England to the present time.

THE North Sea was illuminated by an evening light of unearthly loveliness, such as is found in the far north. It was utterly lonely. But how magnificent! A multitude of small clouds far below me looked like pieces of ice floating on the sea, clear as crystal; the whole scene was tinged with red. Then the sky was swept clean —alas, much too clean! There was not a trace of the "dense carpet of clouds at about five hundred metres", predicted in the weather report, and where I had thought to take shelter in case of need. For a moment I even thought of turning back. But a night landing with *this* machine, I reflected—that will never do. Even if I saved myself, the Messerschmitt would suffer serious damage, possibly beyond repair. Then, indeed, the cat would be out of the bag; nothing could be kept secret. The whole business would be reported in the highest quarters and then all would be over—for ever.

So I told myself to "Stick it out, no matter what happens!"

Then I had a stroke of luck. A veil of mist hung over England. Its surface shone so much in the evening light that nothing down there could be seen from above. I took shelter, of course, at once, flying with the throttle full out and coming slap down from a height of two thousand metres towards the coast at a truly terrific speed. The action of that moment saved me then. There was a Spitfire in pursuit which I outdistanced before I was aware of its presence. I could not look behind; I was too

enclosed in my cabin and too dazzled by the reflections. Had I not been tempted to dive for cover, but remained in the clear air at the pace I had been going he could easily have shot me down.

As it was, I crossed the East Coast a little below Holy Island at about ten o'clock and after sunset, flying low over a little town whose inhabitants must have been terrified, so low did I roar past, barely higher than the houses, at some 750 km. per hour with my two thousand h.p. engines at full throttle and the exhaust echoing through the sleepy streets. At this level the visibility was surprisingly good. I could see several miles, but must have been invisible to my pursuer. I took good care not to rise too high, but flew on at not more than sixteen feet from the ground—even less at times—skimming over trees, men, beasts and houses; what English airmen call "hedge-hopping". It seems to have impressed them a good deal, according to the Duke of Hamilton and judging by the honour done me in a critique in an English flying journal!

I enjoyed every minute of it! At home, this sort of flying was forbidden, although I did occasionally do a bit of it—but not so drastically as on this flight over enemy territory.

"Father" Bauer[1] always said that what I really liked was to fly through barn doors, and it was in this spirit I aimed at the Cheviot, now looming out of the misty evening. This was my guiding point, as previously determined, and keeping within a few yards of the ground I literally climbed up the slope. Never before had I ascended a mountain so rapidly. With a slight alteration of course to the right, I slid down on the other side. On I went over level ground, skimming merrily over house tops and trees, and waving greetings to men working in the fields. The variometer told me I was ascending, until suddenly I was over my next point of orientation—a little dam in a narrow range of hills with Broad Dav the highest summit. Here my course bent to the left.

I had no need to bother with a map; all the details of

[1] Hans Bauer, Hitler's chief pilot.

the course, compass points, distances, etc. were already stored in my memory. After my flight from Harlaching, they may have found a sketch which I had for pinning on my bedroom wall where I could study it during the many sleepless nights, by the light of the reading lamp—the disappearance of which was, quite rightly, debited to my account by my dear wife. In the end I could have flown the whole route while asleep.

In case these sketches should, by some mistake, have been seen prematurely by my much too intelligent wife, who might become altogether too curious about the mysterious X and Y which then played a part in our lives, I had taken the precaution of simply writing *Ostsee* in place of *Nordsee*. That her womanly gift of putting two and two together during the long months of my silent preparations had inclined her to think that I intended to fly on the *southern* course—towards old Marshal Pétain, as she later wrote me in Nuremberg—was a thing I could not then guess. For so many years she had been educated almost to my own level of taciturnity!

At about ten forty p.m. I found myself over Dungavel, the country seat of the Duke of Hamilton, my quite unconscious future host, or so I hoped. Yet, to avoid all possibility of error, I flew on to the coast, a matter of a few minutes. The smooth sea lay beneath me, as calm as a mirror, lit by the rising moon. Just off the mainland, a towering rock, five hundred metres high, rose out of the water, magnificently illuminated, a pale reddish colour. All looked so peaceful and beautiful. What a contrast to the hazardous and exciting experience then just about to come—immediately before my *first* parachute jump! Never shall I forget this picture.

I flew a few kilometres along the coast until I reached a small place on a spit of land with what might have been a mole, as on my map. Satisfied that I was on the spot, I turned east again and was able to pick out the railway and a small lake which was shown on the map with a road by it and south of the residence at Dungavel. I made a curve, ready to land by parachute after rising to a safe

height of some 2,000 metres. Then I switched off the engines, turned the propeller indicator to null to check rotation regardless of the following wind, so that I could drop without being churned into mincemeat—such a superfluous precaution! For I found out afterwards that it would be easier to squeeze through a solid wall than to press forward against that prodigious air pressure. The first engine did not dream of stopping but, being ignited by the red-hot cylinders, went on spinning and humming merrily and took no notice of the fact that the ignition was off and that its conduct was against the rules!

However, the motor did come to its senses finally, senses which nevertheless soon sealed its fate.

Now I fastened everything up and opened the cabin roof, with the notion of climbing out—not without some scepticism and with much curiosity but all the same in excellent spirits. It was out of the question! The air pressure was something that cannot be imagined, even when the machine was going so slowly; and it pressed me up against the back partition as if I were screwed to it. In spite of all the care I had taken to find out about *everything* from my good friends at Messerschmitts, there was just *one* thing I had overlooked. I had never asked about how to jump; I thought it was too simple!

When I think back to that time, I find it astonishing that I never once thought of using the landing gear to slow down the machine. With no motors running, I had sunk lower and lower. Then I suddenly remembered that Greim[1] had once mentioned that one had to turn the machine over on its back and allow oneself to fall out! I then began to turn the machine over but, although I had done all sorts of acrobatics in the air, this was the one thing I had never done with this 'plane. And yet even that was lucky, because I instinctively pulled the joystick as if for a semi-loop instead of setting it for horizontal flight. Coming right over, the centrifugal force held me inside. But, with my head hanging down, had I slid out even a very little, the pressure of air would have broken my neck and spine. But the centrifugal force is immense with such

[1] General Ritter von Greim.

a machine; it made the blood drain from my head and I began to "see stars". I was just able to think: "I am only just above the ground and flying straight down. Soon the crash must come! Is this the end?"

Then everything went black and I passed out. There I sat hurling earthwards, upside down, with no power of control. A desperate, indeed, hopeless situation! The next moment I had recovered consciousness, with full clarity of mind, and found myself staring at the speed gauge: the pointer stood at zero. I flung myself away and at the same moment the machine dropped like a stone.

I pulled at the parachute; the strands held me up, and I hovered in the air; an indescribably glorious and victorious experience all things considered. While unconscious, I had done what I *should* have done, had I been conscious. I had brought the plane out of its semi-looping curve to finish almost perpendicular on its tail. The power of the swing spent, the machine stood motionless, immediately before plunging. Momentarily it had thrown me into a position for the blood to flow back into my head.

A second later would have meant death—Kismet!

So there I was, swaying about in the air, the mist barely illuminated by a full moon which sent no more than a thin reddish light through the night. The sudden checking of speed when I reached the ground was sufficient, after my previous experience, to send the blood again from my brain into my legs, so that I stumbled forward and once more all was as black as night; in short, I had my second "black-out". This time I recovered consciousness very slowly. Had it happened this way when I was in the machine, it would have proved fatal. Everything around me was swimming; I finally awoke, my expression, I dare say, resembling that of Adam when, having been formed from earth, he saw the world for the first time. For at first I had not the remotest idea of what had happened to me or where I was. Only gradually did it become clear to me that I had reached my goal—or rather a new beginning. Alas, more of a *beginning* than I dreamed!

I came down not far from the door of a farmhouse standing alone, and out of the door came a man who asked me if I was British or German and, as I could not walk easily, helped me very nicely into the house and placed me by the fire with a cup of tea. In jumping, I had hurt my ankle, probably knocked it somehow against the parachute gear.

What happened next was much less encouraging; a civil official appeared at the head of a troop of soldiers—a man who had quite evidently, judging by the smell, been celebrating Saturday with good Scottish spirits, probably having taken an extra shot when he heard that a German parachutist had come down. At any rate he staggered about in a cloud of alcoholic vapour, marching me off and prodding me all the while in the back with a large revolver, his finger never leaving the trigger. As I listened to his incessant belching and stumbling, I felt there must have been the finger of God intervening between his shaking hand and the impending shot. A little later the leader of the military asked me to enter a house, but the alcoholic official protested energetically against this and prevented my entry, poking his revolver, this time, into my stomach. I certainly did not move a muscle at this delightful little game with Fate but urged the two to unite in deciding what to do. Finally we did enter the house, where a really nice little Tommy made all well once more by offering me a bottle of milk which he had no doubt brought for himself. After five hours flying and two "black-outs", I expect I looked as if I needed it—as indeed I *did*, for on top of the somewhat exciting adventures of the last few hours I now knew that I was under arrest. Little did I know for how long!

Some R.A.F. officers arrived during the night to take a look at the phenomenon which had landed in their country—this being part of their "duty" as they made clear or at least asserted. An army major with them stared at me for a good while and then, speaking in first-rate German, said that I was the image of Rudolf Hess. He had often seen Hess in Munich, he said. I replied very coldly that it was no news to me that I looked like

Hess; and in fact it was very painful to me. The major understood perfectly.

Then, again suddenly, he produced a little photo of an Me 110 which he had with him and asked me to sign it. He no doubt thought that he was being smart and that I should give myself away. In an easy manner, I scribbled "Alfred Horn" on the photo: later I heard that this signature appeared in fascimile in the Press!

I asked to see the Duke of Hamilton. He had been told about the extraordinary similarity to Hess, and at first refused to entertain the idea that I could in fact be Rudolf Hess. When we spoke together, however, he was compelled to admit that it must be so, and, full of astonishment, exclaimed: "Can you really be Hess?"

At that time I often asked myself the same thing—was I really Rudolf Hess? Or was I, perhaps, in a dream, and would soon awake peacefully in Berlin in the Wilhelmstrasse, or in my own room at Harlaching, looking at the big map pinned on the wall? In the opposite sense, I did dream, again and again, that I was still at home and had not yet got things ready for my flight, or that I had returned from England, my mission having failed. Each time it was like some horrid nightmare. In the dream I did everything possible to attain my aim and became desperate at the idea of returning with nothing achieved.

When I woke up in England after such a nightmare and found myself really there, my first reaction was a sensation of relief but without any clear realization of the actual position of things—so powerfully had my peace objective taken possession of the subconscious mind. That which I had planned and hoped for was perhaps too gigantic; just how gigantic and yet how right we realize perhaps only now.

Ah—well! Peace. Our chaplain, who came to see me recently, was of the opinion that "At last, God has come to us!" I regret to say that—to the distress of the chaplain above all—this view does not entirely coincide with mine. I have a strong impression that, for the time being, it is the Devil who honours us with his presence and now demonstrates it powerfully in many parts of the world.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that God *will* sometime really come to us, conquer Lucifer, and bring peace to tortured humanity.

When I was in England, playing the part of a man who had lost his memory, I learned many things by heart as a means of saving myself from the fate which I was carefully pretending to have suffered; I regarded this as a sort of "training". Together with many other pieces I often repeated to myself—not merely by way of training either—a piece from Goethe's *Egmont*, with which I now conclude my factual account of the flight:

"As if urged onward by invisible spirits, the fiery steeds of the Age run away with the slender chariot which carries our fate. We can do nothing, but courageously hold fast to the reins, swerving now right, now left; avoiding here a rock; there a precipice. Where are we going? No one knows. Hardly can we remember whence we came. . . ."

THE YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT

1—ENGLAND
MAY 1941—JUNE 1945

2—NUREMBURG
JANUARY 1946—JULY 1947

3—SPANDAU
AUGUST 1947—DECEMBER 1951

THE YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT

As most of the following letters from Rudolf Hess whilst in prison in England, Nuremberg and Spandau are written to his wife, only where this is otherwise are the names of the recipients given.

THE PUBLISHERS

1—ENGLAND

(MAY 1941—JUNE 1945)

To Professor Dr. Karl Haushofer *England, 20th May, 1942*

My honoured and dear friend,

As it transpires that my letters take months to reach their destination, I send you this greeting in plenty of time for your birthday.

With it go my best wishes to you and yours.

Do not worry over me! You, less than anyone, need do this. That my present situation is not exactly agreeable goes without saying. But, in time of war, we have to put up with many things that are not agreeable. That is not important. You know best what counts in the long run.

How often I think of our discussion group at Bitterauf's of blessed memory, and of my paper on the Gneisenau which was read there. You played a part in this, as in many other things that concerned me.

> "Let the waves like thunder break,
> Be your very life at stake;
> May you crash or may you land
> E'er as your own pilot stand!"

That I crashed is not to be denied; and it is equally certain that I was my own pilot! In this matter I have nothing with which to reproach myself. It was I who took the controls. You know as well as I do that the compass which guides our affairs is influenced by forces that are infallible—even when we know them not. May those forces be favourable to you in the years to come!

England, 9th September, 1942

. . . I find myself thinking, again and again, of my medical talks with Professor G., and especially of his ideas on the fight against cancer—a matter I have long had at heart. Just before my flight, it was his wish to go forward with this research, aided by a colleague. Alas! At that time I was too much taken up with my own project to give myself to this task, so rich in possible blessings for humanity. Now that I have time to ponder, it grieves me greatly that I could not lend a hand in this work. . . .

. . . Since I mention flying I should add that this was the reason for a certain cooling off in my relations with Udet. He did not want me to fly the Me when I was living near Berlin and wished to practise flying with this machine, ostensibly "just for fun". The innocent man made it a condition that I should obtain a special permit from the Führer, whose reluctance to let me fly had meant a ban for a period which had just expired. I might just as well have placed myself voluntarily in protective custody! Yet it was actually quite lucky for me that nothing did come of my desire to fly just then, since to do so anywhere near Berlin could hardly have been kept secret. Sooner or later the Führer would have learned of my activities and the result would have been a new ban on my flying, this time perhaps for longer than a year. And, having pledged my word, it would have been out of the question for me to evade this in any way, my plan would have come to an abrupt end, and I should never have ceased to blame myself for my lack of caution. These little rubs with Udet never went so far as to be really unfriendly. Soon afterwards I chanced to hear of his flying a Storch and landing his machine—nearly if not quite—*inside* one of the hangars in the Berlin Airport —purely for the fun of it! I wrote to him straight away saying that, of course, I understood that juggling of this sort was a necessity for the Quartermaster General of the Air Force, and that he had, as a matter of course, obtained permission from the Führer! He rang me up, as cheerful as you please but implored me, at the same

time, on no account to mention the matter in "the highest circles". I had to laugh.

How closely my life is bound up with mountains! Isn't it extraordinary? I estimate that roughly one half of my life has been spent somewhere near a high mountain range. And I am more than glad that the little chap[1] will become a regular mountain boy now that he's going to Ostrachtal. The language certainly won't bother him. I can quite see him quickly picking up the genuine dialect. Though it's almost impossible to think of him as a schoolboy, confronted for the first time with the serious side of life; but it will be next year! In my eyes he is still the tiny wide-eyed child who was sitting on his chamber in the nursery at Harlaching when I last saw him! But one must remember that, even if he were never to go to school, we still could not make him stay put at the age when children are most fascinating.

It gives me great delight to hear about every little thing that happens to you and around you—go on writing this sort of letter! It means more to me than anything else you could write. What you *think*, I *know* already! And you know that I think on the same lines, without having to write about it. . . .

England, 24th November, 1942

After I had sent off my birthday letter to Buz, I suddenly remembered that it would go through the hands of I don't know how many censors—I am apt to forget that—and, in the circumstances, it was too full of personal matters. I found that quite detestable. Sometimes after making a speech I had similar feelings: one would like to take back a phrase that somehow or other slipped out. But all eternity cannot bring back either what one may have done in a given second or what one may have failed to do. . . .

It must indeed seem strange to all of you when my letters deal with points raised in yours written perhaps

[1] Wolf Rüdiger Hess; born 18th November, 1937, and usually referred to as Buz in these letters.

eight months ago. The world is out of joint in every respect. But one day the joints will be fitted together again—and we too shall be reunited.

England, 14th February, 1943

Oh! how I rejoiced to know that the little chap still remembers his Dad; that he still knew where all the splendid toys were put away—the puffing trains, wheels rattling on the rails, with which we secretly amused ourselves in my study during those days before I left. I often think of the things I intended to tell him and show him, following up the bent of the "technical, geographical and scientific" Buz.

I certainly never dreamed at one time how vitally important my technical and mathematical gifts would some day become in my life. Without this knowledge, I could not have achieved the "flight of my life", nor could I ever have mastered the complicated mechanism of the Me machine or navigated it. Everything in our lives has its purpose, seen in the long view—even if half a century may elapse before we really know what it is. Many never know what it is! . . .

. . . I have just been reading *Truth and Fiction* and it gave me quite a new picture of Goethe's father. As one reads, each chapter makes it more clear that he was a somewhat eccentric old man, obstinate but full of character. In fact one gets to like him more and more, though it must be admitted that this was by no means the intention of the writer, who was unable to see in his father's rigid attitude towards national affairs anything beyond the awkward situations it caused. This side of his nature was certainly *not* inherited from his father. Here we can perceive a weakness—especially perhaps as seen from our present-day viewpoint—a failing which impressed me more than I expected. But where is the man who has no weakness—even including this great lonely figure?

England, 25th March, 1943

Ah—well! It was a long cherished dream of ours that we might one day present the world with a great poet or

musician who would bring happiness to mankind! But, however much we humans plan, it is another power that makes the decisions. According to all that I have heard about the tendencies and occupations of the little fellow, I feel that his gifts lie in the direction of technical science. Unchecked by paternal authority, he will now be able to develop this talent, an opportunity denied to me, apart from little flights over the sea—vvvvvvv.[1] A few years ago it was my pet ambition to be the first to fly the Atlantic in the reverse direction, after Lindbergh's west-east flight. I little knew that the preparations I then made for a whole year would in the end come in so useful.[2]

England, 16th July, 1943

For some months I have been translating a book from English into German, working from breakfast until the mid-day meal. I have also been jotting down, now and then, anecdotes from the life of my boy, episodes taken from my own life and various other matters of interest to you and to a future (I hope numerous) group of grandchildren. Or perhaps I write a letter home, but that is not a *daily* occupation vvvvvvv.

I have broken off my habit of resting after the chief meal. Sometimes I have the opportunity of taking a walk in the neighbourhood, which is beautiful. When the weather is good I enjoy little rests on the way, selecting spots where there is as enjoyable a view as possible. The colours of this landscape are unusual and attractive. An essential part is the red earth, lying between meadows and fields of green turning to yellowish tinges when ripe,

[1] In the private correspondence of the Hess family, a so-called "laughter line" had been customary for several decades—represented in writing by a wavy line and in typewriting by a string of vs.

[2] *The Lindbergh Counter-flight:* Rudolf Hess, who was a first line Flight-Lieutenant in the war of 1914–18, formed the intention, after the first west-east crossing of the Atlantic by Lindbergh, to attempt the first crossing from east to west. Careful preparations were made for a year or more and several important German industrial firms were ready to give financial assistance. But finally the plan broke down, and Köhl Fitzmaurice-Hünefold carried out the sensational flight.

and matching the autumn trees. Every cloud shadow at once changes the effect of the colours and with it the whole impression. It can happen that a distant mountain, dominating the background, changes within a few minutes, under the influence of the light, from darkest violet through dark blue to olive and emerald green, with reddish brown and yellow turning to bluish grey. Further, I found that the colours are more beautiful in autumn and winter than in other seasons. On the one hand, this has something to do with the softer light and, on the other, with the ploughed up fields which look even redder against the green of those left unploughed in the winter. I am quite ready to believe, as I am told, that artists are especially attracted to this district.

But the more beautiful it is, the more one realizes the truth of Goethe's words:

"When lovers hear the nightingale,
He sets their joyous hearts a-winging,
But when the captive hears his tale,
He finds but sadness in the singing."

England, 4th September, 1943

It makes me very happy to see, again and again, from your letters that nothing has changed in your *inward relationship* to the man with whose destiny we have been so closely linked in joy and in suffering, for more than twenty years. You have changed no more than I myself have changed. One must never forget that these times have placed him under a nervous strain, hard to imagine —a strain responsible for states of excitement, in which decisions have been made which would not have been made in more normal times. Writing thus, I am not thinking of myself—not in the least—but of my lads.[1] As regards myself, I was prepared for anything.

Taking any such excitement into account didn't alter the fact that thinking of my lads and their fate, I was overcome with anger from the first, although your latest news puts things in a different light from the way I saw them in my ignorance. The result was that, for several

[1] See page 25.

days running, I stamped up and down my room with rage, expressing and explaining my views—all in a regrettably one-sided manner. My explanations were certainly not directed to the man responsible for certain points of detail, who assuredly could not plead that he had to make quick decisions for his "executive measures" under strain of excitement. In this relationship there is nothing but a complete vacuum, which will always remain a vacuum.[1]

England, 15th January, 1944

I have been sitting here for, literally, several hours wondering what I can write to you about. But I get no further; and that I regret to say is for a very special reason. Since, sooner or later, you will notice it or find out about it. I may as well tell you: I have completely lost my memory.[2] The whole of the past swims in front of my mind enveloped in a grey mist. I cannot recollect even the most ordinary things. The reason for it I do not know. The doctor gave me a lengthy explanation, but I have already forgotten what it was. He assured me, however, that all would be well again. I trust he is right.

Moreover, that is the reason why I can't actually write a sensible letter; for *that*, memory is needed—more than one might think. It is different though, if one has a letter in front of one to answer, providing subject matter and stimulus. Your last letter reached me on 13th September of last year!

Send me books again. In the monotonous conditions of my solitary confinement they are of the greatest value.

England, 26th February, 1944

Please write again! Since September last year I have had nothing from you.

When you do not write, I can't write either, for I need stimulus. Without a letter of yours I truly do not know what I can say to you. For, as I said in my last letter, I

[1] This remark referred to the then Reichsleiter Bormann. *Note by Ilse Hess.*

[2] The loss of memory referred to in this and the following letter was a subterfuge: see the letter of 10th March, 1947, page 64.

have completely lost my memory—even if this be only a temporary state of things, as the doctor assures me.

At the very least, tell me how the boy likes going to school.

England, 15th January, 1945

I am very glad that Buz, as you say, shows no inclination to thrust himself forward, and that you, as indeed I would have expected, do not encourage anything of the sort. Those who rise to the top of the class through pushing themselves, and not because of natural talent asserting itself, are apt to prove disappointing in later life.

One thing only I wish for my son: that he becomes *possessed* by something! I don't care what it is: inventing machines, a new discovery in medicine, or the drama—even if nobody ever makes the machines, the play is never acted or even read, or the doctors of all opinions, united for once, fall upon him to tear his notions to bits. . . .

England, 9th March, 1945

A while ago, I read with much pleasure the short novels contained in *Lesebuch Deutscher Erzähler*. To my own surprise, Jean Paul charmed me as much as anyone—although I had actually written to you once not to send me anything of his or like it. Like many others I began to read him too soon, before I could appreciate the finer points, so that I was merely bored by his breadth of treatment. When I am home again, I will certainly read *Schulmeisterlain*, *Wuz*, etc.—also Stifter whose *Brigitta* pleased me no less. What an infinite breadth of form and style in character and presentation is spanned by our poets and novelists! It compares with that embraced by our musicians, great and small, in the field of sound.

England, 18th June, 1945

By way of an appendix to my letter to all of you, I will send you a few lines, even if I cannot write—and in view of the censorship would not care to write—what I would really *wish*. You will readily imagine how often during the last few weeks my thoughts have turned to

HESS THE SPORTSMAN

Above: With his wife and English and foreign athletes watching events at the Olympic Games, 1936.

Below: Signing autograph for an Indian at the International Hockey Match, 1936.

Photos: Ullstein

Photos: Ullstein

HESS THE VETERAN

Above: Talking to a British soldier on the occasion of the visit of British War Veterans to Berlin in 1937.

Below: With General Tanner and other South African War veterans in Berlin in 1937.

the years gone by; to this quarter of a century of history, concentrated for us in one name, and full of the most wonderful human experiences. History is not ended. It will sooner or later take up the threads apparently broken off for ever, and knit them together in a new pattern. The human element is no more and lives only in memory.

Very few people have been privileged, as we were, to participate, from the very beginning, in the growth of a unique personality through joy and sorrow, hope and trouble, love and hate and all the manifestations of greatness—and, further, in all the little indications of human weakness, without which a man is not truly worthy of love.

Thus it comes about that my thoughts turn much to you, also, when I think of him:

> "I love all those whose fall is like the heavy rain drops from the dark cloud hanging over head; for they presage the lightning on the way—and, so heralding, fall one by one."
>
> *Nietzsche.*

England, 21st June, 1945

At my request, the Swiss Ambassador[1] obtained for me Ranke's work on the Popes, and Kugler's *History of Frederick the Great* with the drawings by Menzel, from the original wood blocks, supposed to be no longer in existence; Carlyle on Frederick the Great; the works of Kleist; *Maler Nolten* by Möricke; Grimmelshausen's *Simplizissimus*; Ernst Wiechert's *Wälder und Menchen*; Humboldt's Letters to his Bride, which I hadn't asked for; Keller's *Grüner Heinrich, Züricher Novellen, Legenden* and *Das Sinngedicht.*

How often have I seen Ranke's work on the Papacy on the shelves at home and shrunk from tackling it, not then aware how fascinating is Ranke's presentation of the subject, how full of vitality is his style, and what splendid remarks of a general nature are strewn here and there through the work. I regret to say I have nearly finished

[1] Dr. Hans Frölicher, cp. letter dated 23rd June, 1949.

the second volume. But I will certainly read right through the whole again. After all, was it not Schopenhauer who said that worth-while books should be read at least twice?

Really valuable and a source of joy to me is Konrad Günther's *Naturlebem*, all the more since such good source material is provided. As soon as I have the chance I mean to read many things thus indicated, such as Aschoff's *Das Leben und der Zellenstaat.* In the same line of thought there is an English book which I am now beginning—*The Science of Life* by H. G. Wells and Huxley.

As the month of May began, I came across the following piece in Günther: "The work of a great man does not achieve its full effect until after the death of its creator, for the present cannot grasp it. . . . Can there be anything more heroic than a development that follows an undeviating course in the pursuit of a great task, imposed from the earliest beginnings even when the chosen path appears again and again to become confused and lost and becomes a pilgrimage of suffering? What a power, what a joyful victory to sweep along with one all that is encountered on this path, turning it towards the purpose in view in face of all difficulties!"

In the same book I found this quotation from Schopenhauer: "The highest that can be achieved is an heroic passage through life. Such a life is led by the man who, pursuing a purpose for the benefit of all, struggles against all-too-great difficulties, receives yet a poor reward or *no* reward at all!"

2—NUREMBERG

(JANUARY 1946—JULY 1947)

Note by Ilse Hess: In the late autumn of 1945 my husband was brought by air from England to Nuremberg. Though I heard from him through his advocate, Dr. von Rohrscheidt of Berlin, the first direct news in writing after his arrival in Nuremberg reached me in January, 1946.

Nuremberg, 15th January, 1946

Do not let yourself be taken in by bad flashlight photos or by tendentious reports, no matter whence these

come. The latter are as untrue as it is, on the other hand, true that I am able to write to you. I am still exactly the same man, inwardly and outwardly, as my comrades have recognized with joy. True, I have lost weight, naturally; in fact I purposely eat little, feeling much better for doing so when unable to take my usual exercise.

I now know, better than ever, that Goethe was *wrong* in his judgment of the power of the base and vile. You will one day realize this folly in spite of all! May God, the All-powerful, continue to give you strength as He gives it to me.

Nuremberg, 25th January, 1946

The trial is in part horrible and in part monotonous; but every now and then it can be interesting. In any case, it is an experience that will provide recollections somewhat out of the ordinary run vvvvv! By way of taking my mind off, I am studying the history of the First World War in which I am greatly interested, although it came just before the time of the modern Icarus. Unfortunately, however, I have not so much time for reading as I had in England.

Nuremberg, 5th February, 1946

Memorandum for Dr. Seidl[1]

Herr Hess has received the letter of the 2nd of the month. He has never had any confidential dealings with Herr von R. The reasons why he finally refused to have him as his advocate are apparent from the enclosed document.[2] He would prefer, as always to defend him-

[1] To avoid the censorship this and some further letters were written indirectly as memoranda for the advocate Seidl.

[2] Letter to the International Military Court:

In the *New York Herald Tribune* (European Edition) date 27th January, 1946, there is a report of an interview given by my former defending counsel, Reichtsanwalt Dr. von Rohrscheidt. This contains a passage in which strictly confidential instructions given by me to Dr. von Rohrscheidt in respect of my defence are given publicity, while at the same time it is emphasized that these were my instructions.

This constitutes a breach of confidence and an offence against the secrecy to which an advocate is pledged; it is a grave professional

self. He is, moreover, convinced—and is glad that this view is shared by others—that he is the best advocate for his cause. His mastery of all the material is superior to that of anyone else and he has in his possession all that is necessary as occasion arises, whereas an advocate would have to consult him continually. As, according to the statutory regulations, a defendant may have several defenders he would, in any case, wish to have a jurist as second counsel for the defence. After his claim to defend himself had been turned down, at first Göering's defending counsel was assigned to him; but he was already overburdened, so Dr. Alfred Seidl, who was acting already for Frank, took on the task. Dr. Seidl is the keenest and most aggressive of all the defending counsels; and is moreover an old ski-runner who had been up the Kreuzeck with Herr Hess. Finally, he speaks pure Munich dialect. The two last points are not essential conditions for a good advocate but they help to create a good personal relationship which is, in its turn, an essential factor in creating a firm basis of confidence. Herr Hess is extremely glad to have the services of Dr. Seidl in his defence.

Nuremberg, 21st March, 1946

I do not worry in the very least about the boy's schooling. What he does not learn now he will learn later. The loss of a year in purely bookish learning makes little difference in life; and as for his development in other directions he will not stand still; moreover the times are such that he will be liable to develop too quickly.

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offence which, in normal times, would lead to a denunciation before the governing chamber of lawyers.

I therefore hereby place on record that I no longer have any confidence whatever in my former advocate.

At the same time I draw the attention of the Court to the fact that I have now been a whole week without a defending counsel, while I have not been permitted to take advantage of the right to which the Statute entitles me of pleading my own case. In consequence of this state of things, I was prevented from questioning even a single witness of all those who came forward during this period—although, again, I was entitled by the Statute to do this.

Nuremberg, 30th January, 1946
Rudolf Hess

At what age should the learning of classical languages begin, normally speaking? I should like him to have at least a year of Greek. If he does not care for it, he can always leave off, and he will have a foundation to his credit. As far as I am concerned, he can, at the same time, have a go at circus acrobatics.

My address is as follows: Rudolf Hess, Nuremberg, Prison for War "Criminals" vvvvv.

Nuremberg, 2nd May, 1946

Up to the present I have *not* been "fired upon"![1] All sorts of odd rumours about us never cease to buzz! I only hear of these now and then, for I do not read the papers. And the things I do hear serve only to confirm me in my view that I do right in having nothing to do with all these fabrications. I prefer not to touch them.

You tell me things sometimes so that I can have a laugh, and I do laugh! But please don't think that I never laugh otherwise. That the laughter is mingled with a few drops of bitterness is a matter of course. They serve to give an aroma suited to the times.

The letters of my son and heir are really classical. It would seem to be the case that I think of him as being bigger and more "grown up" than he really is. I am naturally quite pleased with this—he will be "grown up" only too soon. The peculiar conditions of to-day will play a part in bringing about a more rapid development. How everything grows nowadays! Even I myself am growing —or so I believe vvvv.

Ilse Hess to R.H. (Memorandum for Dr. Seidl) 7th May, 1946

Frau Hess does not understand why Herr Hess does not read, for example, the *Neue Zeitung* (the paper published by the American Forces for Germany, which, at least as a paper, is good). She has noticed several times through his letters, and through accounts given to her by other women who had been permitted to visit their

[1] In the Swiss broadcast from Beromunster it had been stated that a Soviet prosecutor in the Court had fired upon Göering and Hess.

husbands in camps, that many of our men are lacking in a background of concrete knowledge of the conditions (such as they are) which exist in the world of to-day, and thus live in a world which no longer exists and will never again exist in that form. Once upon a time it used to be said that the wheel of world-history did not turn back—and to-day it will not turn back! We must, in one way or another, deal with things as they are, which does not mean that our basic attitude will be changed. What goes on in the world to-day is, in part, *very* interesting and one can learn immeasurably from it. There is much, also, to remind us of 1918; but because the world as a whole is more strongly engaged, the picture is nevertheless quite different.

Frau Hess has to laugh, because she is almost giving a political lecture to Herr Hess—a thing which he abhors from a woman! But she *must* tackle all these problems.

Nuremberg, 8th May, 1946

From the room on the second storey where we take our meals during the mid-day interval in the theatrical performance, I enjoy an extensive, beautiful view towards the north-east, as far as the distant heights. My soul reaches out in this direction—not only over this visible landscape, but also towards other blue mountains, not visible at this distance to the physical eye, which mean home and love. . . . Further, I believe that, even without the *Neue Zeitung*, I see things more accurately than do most other people who keep themselves "regularly informed as to world-affairs" vvvvv.

> "He who cannot soar boldly above the age
> Sees not when he looks
> And lives not when he breathes!"[1]

As to the wheel of world-history? No, it certainly does not move back, yet—just as certainly—it does not move forwards in the fashion which so many believe, hope or fear!

[1] Dedication inscribed by Dietrich Eckart in the book version of his play *Lorenzaccio* which he gave to my husband in 1922.

Moreover, I am not able to obtain papers regularly, let alone subscribe to them. I am dependent upon stray copies left in a friendly manner by gentlemen of my "environment". I can dispense with such offerings of mercy—just as I always refuse on principle to accept, for example, the little presents of chocolate or bon-bons which one of my "environment" seeks to hand me sometimes. In the same way I never give my signature to anyone, although I am asked for it several times a day. And no doubt the ensuing high market-value of my writing vvvvvv must have the effect of increasing the competition to get hold of specimens vvvvvv.

Indeed, speaking generally, there is no lack of amusing matter. Quite the reverse, and I should recommend everybody to regard the Interlude now being performed, as far as possible, from the comic side. . . .

Memorandum to Dr. Seidl *Nuremberg, May, 1946*

If my wife is not alarmed by my "iciness" in the event of a visit and would like to go forward with the attempt to procure one, let her do so, and try to obtain a permit. Actually, I am sure it will prove in vain.

To his son *Nuremberg, 27th July, 1946*

My dear Buz,

I thank you for your letter in which you let me know that you have given up the idea of driving the locomotive pulling the tipping-trucks in the Munich rubble-clearing work, in favour of becoming a driver of a real railway train. I give you my full permission straight away! I understand only too well that you want to race along at high speeds. Of course, you could go even faster as the pilot of an aircraft. But I expect you have never flown and have no notion of what it is like. Well, you have plenty of time in which to think it over. If I were you I shouldn't think for a moment of being a tram-driver; he dawdles as compared with the others, and he has to use the brakes so often, because of all the cars, cyclists, men, women and dogs that keep getting in the way. . . .

Nuremberg, 18th August, 1946

The traveller's tale of the *Bremenfahrer* is not exactly calculated to make you want to make another such "inland journey", climbing over almost insuperable boundaries.[1]

I read your account—for this and other reasons—with one eye laughing and the other crying. Yet, taken as a whole, it amused me, and you very sensibly took it in the same spirit.

"Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do fail: and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

Let divinity continue to shape for us! Greetings!

Nuremberg, 31st August, 1946

From your "Lachlinie" vvvvvv I realized that you had taken humorously Dr. Seidl's communication to the effect that I had again lost my memory completely. Meanwhile, you will certainly have heard through the radio that there has been another "miracle", and that I have completely recovered it vvvvv. Or they may very well tell you that I have lost my reason; or at least suffer from fixed ideas. I hope you will see the humorous side of this also. Karli[2] once said that for the sake of a great cause one must be able to suffer the pain of seeming to one's people, for a time, to be a traitor. To this I would add: or seeming to be crazy. After all that I have experienced and suffered in the last five and a half years, the latest trick played upon me by the strange fate which guides me cannot disturb me at all; on the contrary I face it with a quiet and balanced mind and a smile, with the same imperturbability with which I shall receive the verdict. . . .

[1] Note by Ilse Hess: I had made a journey to Bremen which had proved very adventurous under the disturbed conditions of transport and the complications of the various Zones.

[2] Professor Dr. Karl Haushofer, 1869–1946.

Nuremberg, 2nd September, 1946

In regard to the verdict, one has to reckon with *everything:* Death, Prison, Lunatic Asylum.

Karli told me that Dr. Gudden, the personal doctor of the Bavarian King Ludwig, had once said to Karli's father that one must always take care that the inmates of an asylum did not one fine day seize the few sane persons living with them and lock them up, as a measure of self-protection vvvvv. His anxiety was only too well founded: but what happened was that the mad king at Lake Starnberg did not lock up the doctor, but had him put to death. On this principle, one cannot be too sure.

To come to the main point of this letter: it has now been decided that the prisoners here should be graciously permitted to receive ONE visit from their relations, that is to say they may be seen and heard through a closely-knit iron wire net. I have firmly refused to meet either you or anyone else under these conditions, which I maintain to be beneath our dignity. Between ourselves we should have to admit that "at Landsberg we met under conditions that were not very pleasant", but there is a vast difference between sitting side-by-side in the same room for half an hour or an hour, with no hindrance save the presence in a corner of a good German soldier of the guard who slept part of the time—or very kindly pretended to do so—and seeing each other through a wire net, with guards on both sides who will certainly *not* sleep and, above all, are not decent German fellows of our own guards.

I agreed at the time, finally, that I would not resist your desire to attempt to obtain a permit to see me: but I gave way on this point because I knew definitely that your request would not be granted. Now the position is rather different and one day you will agree with me, even if to-day you wish to carry out your plan. . . .

I assume that my final words before the court will be suppressed by the newspapers and the radio, so I put them down in writing for you!

"The statements in evidence placed before this court

by my defending counsel I will leave to the future judgment of my people and of history, for that alone is essential to me. I do not defend myself before prosecutors to whom I deny the right to make accusations against me and my fellow-countrymen. I do not propose to argue about charges that are concerned with the internal affairs of Germany, with which foreigners have no right to interfere. I make no complaints about statements, the aim of which is to discredit and dishonour myself and the entire German people. I regard such statements coming from enemies as confirmations of our honour. It has been my privilege to serve for many years under the greatest son to whom my people has given birth in its thousand years of history. Even if it were possible for me to do so, I would never wish to wipe this period of service out of my life. It fills me with happiness to know that I did my duty towards my people: my duty as a German, as a National Socialist, and as a true follower of the Führer. I regret nothing. If now I stood at the beginning of my career I would act again as I did act, even if I knew that what awaited me was the stake at which I was to be burnt alive. Whatever men may do to me, the day will come when I will stand before the judgment seat of the Eternal: to Him I will give an account of my actions, and I know that He will pronounce me innocent."

Please greet all those who think of me.

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *25th September, 1946*

The final sentences of your speech in court which you wrote out for us were broadcast in full by the English station, but I do not know if this was the case with the German stations, because at that time we were travelling and could not listen in to the mid-day news. Moreover, the German commentator at Nuremberg is far from being popular with our public; most people do not bother to listen to this Dr. Gaston Ulman, but prefer the English evening transmission which is clearer and more objective. What you are reported to have said otherwise, according to the papers, we do not understand, although we fully

understand what you sent us in writing! Nor do we understand why your lawyer put forward the plea of insanity. But since 1941 there have been so many things that we could not understand that one more makes no difference.

Nuremberg, 26th September, 1946

Your letter has given me very great pleasure, for now I know not only that you understand my position in the matter of a "visit", but also that you are with me in placing your honour and that of Germany above all personal wishes and feelings. . . .

By the way, you can comfort Buz: even if I had declared myself willing to receive a visit, he would not have been able to see me, as, in this case wisely, children under age are not allowed to "peep through the bars". . . .

Furthermore, you are right in quoting the fine saying that greater than fate is the courage which bears it without giving way.

Nuremberg, 2nd October, 1946

In the meantime you will have heard about the result of the proceedings here, including my sentence of "life long imprisonment" vvvvvv.[1]

I am greatly surprised, for I had reckoned with the death sentence. If I attached any importance at all to the judgment of the court, I might feel satisfied so far. As it is, however, there is no question of being or not being satisfied. I find myself in a state of most perfect calm, disturbed only by the thought that I cannot convey my own state to comrades who cannot feel in the same way about the matter. In accordance with my refusal, on principle, to recognize the court, I paid no attention—ostentatiously—when the judgment in my case was announced: I did not put on the earphones through which the translation was given, and I did not listen to what the President said in English.

[1] Rudolf Hess was brought before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg on the afternoon of 1st October, 1946, and informed that he had been found guilty and sentenced to lifelong imprisonment.

As a matter of fact it was quite a long time before I discovered, accidentally, what the sentence had been. The reading of the statement giving the reasons for the sentence was given by a Russian, so that it cost me no effort at all to understand nothing. . . .

The reasons for the sentence were read out by a Russian and may be summarized as follows:

Hess is being proceeded against on all four points. He joined the National Socialist Party (Nazis) in 1920 and took part in the Putsch at Munich in November, 1923, afterwards being in prison with Hitler at Landsberg in 1924 and on terms of confidence and intimacy with him right up to the flight to Scotland. In April, 1933, he was given the post of *Stellvertreter* and, later in the year, he became a *Reichsminister* without portfolio. In 1939, he became a member of the Ministry of Defence and, a few days later, was appointed to succeed Hitler, after Goering. In May, 1941, he flew to Scotland.

Crimes Against Peace

As the Führer's representative, Hess was the leading personality in the Nazi Party and endowed with the power to make important decisions. Hess gave his support to military preparation and signed the decree for introducing conscription in March, 1935; he urged upon the people the importance of armaments. In the years 1933–37, it is true that he made speeches advocating peace and international economic co-operation; but this cannot alter the fact that he knew, as well as any of those brought before this Court, how firmly Hitler was determined to pursue his ambitions and how unlikely it was that a man so fanatical and so addicted to violence would fail to use force, if it proved the sole means of attaining his ends.

Hess was a well-informed and willing participant in the German attacks upon Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. He was closely connected with the illegal Nazi Party in Austria, from the time of the murder of Dollfuss to the Anschluss; he was in Vienna, in March, 1938, when German troops entered the city and on 13th March he signed the law for the union of Austria and Germany. He delivered speeches favouring the Union of the two States.

In the summer of 1938, Hess co-operated actively with Henlein, the leader of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia; and when they became incorporated in the Reich, he carried out the fusion of the Sudeten Party with the Nazi Party. In June, 1939, he was authorized to participate in the administration both of Austria and the Sudeten lands.

In August, 1939, Hess gave public approval to Hitler's policy with regard to Poland and was a party to the taking over of Danzig and certain lands in Poland, and to the setting up of the *Generalgouvernement* in Poland.

PRISONER OF PEACE

Nuremberg, 5th October, 1946

I will attempt to copy Ilse's beautiful greeting to my comrades and to pass it round. I do not know if and when my letter of Oct. 2nd will reach you, so I will repeat briefly that, to my astonishment, I was not condemned to death but to lifelong imprisonment. No doubt that will sound bad enough for you all. As for me, it makes me smile. I am the essence of peace and quiet; but I am pained by the thought of the spiritual sufferings of

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Until the flight to Scotland, Hess was Hitler's closest personal confidant, and he must have been aware, from the beginning, of the latter's aggressive plans and was always prepared to lend his support.

When he flew to England, Hess brought with him certain suggestions for peace which, he asserted, would be acceptable to Hitler. It is significant that this flight took place no more than ten days after the day when Hitler took his decision to attack Russia, and fixed the date of 22nd June, 1941, for the event.

In the conversations that took place after the arrival of Hess in England, he lent his full support to all the acts of aggression committed by Germany, and expressed the view that England and France were guilty of the war.

War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity

There is material to prove that the Party leaders under Hess participated in the giving of orders involving war crimes; further, Hess may have had knowledge of crimes committed in the East even if he were not personally involved; he proposed laws directed against Jews and Poles and signed decrees, compelling certain groups of Poles to become German citizens. However, the Court does not believe that this evidence is sufficient to justify a verdict of guilty in this instance. The Court decided, after detailed investigation of medical evidence, that the state of the accused was such that his trial need not be postponed. Attempts to have a further medical examination were rejected by the Court, after hearing the statement of the prison doctor. It may be correct that Hess behaves abnormally, suffers from loss of memory, and that his mental state has worsened during this trial. But it does not appear that he does not understand the charges brought against him, or is unable to defend himself.

A defending counsel, appointed by this Court, represented him ably. There is no reason to think that Hess was not quite normal mentally at the time when the acts in question were perpetrated.

Conclusion

The court declares the defendant Hess to be guilty as to points one and two; and not guilty in respect of points three and four.

comrades who will suffer the death penalty, and more especially of their families. . . .

Now, as before, I beg you to give up the idea of a visit. The conditions formerly imposed remain the same.

Nuremberg, 13th October, 1946

I have just sent the following letter to Dr. Seidl: "The commandant has informed me that you have sent in a petition for mercy on my behalf to the International Control Committee. Hereby I put it on record that this took place without my knowledge and against my desire. I regard the handing in of such a petition as an act devoid of dignity."

It was a good thing that your letter complaining of my silence and that of Dr. Seidl reached me before this happened, or, in spite of everything, I would have thought you were behind this move. For a few moments a wave of anger swept over me: then I smiled, as I smile at so many happenings to-day.

Nuremberg, 28th October, 1946

I am allowed to write one letter and two cards each month. You can pass these on to my mother. What will one day prove to be the significance of the death of the Eleven Men[1] is not realized to-day, save by a very few. I cannot now write anything about it. We are in the midst of epoch-making events. What we now suffer are the birth-pains of a new epoch. At present everything seems negative—yet the time is coming when the New and the Great will be born. . . .

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *6th November, 1946*

Your clear and unmistakable reply to Dr. Seidl has really troubled us! It is true that we, too, were more than horrified about the version published in the Press of his petition for mercy on your behalf, which did not appear to fit in with the pattern of your conduct. In fact these

[1] The Nuremberg executions took place on 16th October.

petitions in general—as was obvious from the beginning—were quite pointless since they had no chance of success; and they have been unfavourably regarded. But in Munich I had a talk with Seidl when he explained to me—and I understood his point—that what he had handed in was *not* a petition for mercy, but a statement of evidence, repeating the *legal* argument put forward at Nuremberg, this time for the benefit of the Control Council, to the effect that the penalty imposed for the two points on which Hess had been found guilty was heavy beyond all reason, and *itself* constituted a flagrant and grievous *breach of the law.*

Nuremberg, 18th December, 1946

Apart from the fact that he did not inform me beforehand, I admit that Dr. Seidl did well in handing in his petition to the Control Council—now that I have seen it. Tell him I am now reconciled!

To-day the happy people are those who have plenty of duties to distract their minds. From the crucible of these years we shall all emerge purified by fire. To look older, or even very old, is accordingly of small importance. The outward and visible will be more than compensated by a quite new and incomparably higher spiritual relationship.

Nuremberg, 8th February, 1947

The book by Heyking,[1] wife of a diplomat of the old school, has many interesting points. For example, in her valuation of a "career". In view of the time in which she lived this is quite understandable. Men are so made that they want to assert themselves; they want to be highly regarded. At that time, outward success came first, second and third: nothing else counted. It was the standard by which all things were measured. . . .

In our own time, too, in certain circles and amongst people of the older generation this viewpoint still exists in some force. The change of outlook arising through the younger generation has been very slow. I hope that in our

[1] Elizabeth von Heyking: *Tagebücher aus vier Weltteilen.*

own age we shall take a big step forward, without anyone making this a purpose in itself! What is going on to-day in the outer world is also, seen from some angles, an aspect of this self-assertive force. The character of a man, his *inner* value, his ability as something separate from success—the time will come when these things will replace the externals.

What Heyking has to say about the state of things in China intrigues me—also in relation to Japan. China was still in the Middle Ages. . . . I was interested most of all in the parts dealing with the "Grey Eminence" of the Foreign Office, Bismarck's fall; the behaviour of the Kaiser at that and other times—not forgetting the errors of our Ambassador, as related by his wife, who found it right to reveal them to the following generation, having no idea of the grave blunders he had made! Full of pride about her Edmund, "the far-seeing diplomat", who rejoiced over the "new policy" when, at the end of the Sino-Japanese war, Germany fell into the arms of Japan, the fruit of which course was that Japan declared war against Germany in 1914: the note contained in part the same words as our own in respect to Shimonoseki.

Raeder got to know the Heykings in China when he was a sub-lieutenant, a thing which still existed then. She was beautiful and clever, he less so. . . .

Nuremberg, 10th March, 1947

That my letters from England, for a time, came so infrequently had to do with an assumed loss of memory. For it is *very* difficult to write letters when one is supposed to have no memory! There is the danger of making a mistake that will reveal the truth. It was my contention that I had a family, that I could just recollect that and nothing more. The address of my family had slipped my mind. It was there on one or other of your letters; but I had "forgotten" that I had any letters vvvvv.

Your new letters always contained something or other that gave me a starting point, apparently, for my letters; thus I would not have to use my memory in any way to arouse suspicion. In short, I was forced to wait for a letter

HESS THE DIPLOMAT

Above: With the British Ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps and English visitors at the first meeting of the Anglo German Society in Berlin, 1934.

Below: With the Japanese Ambassador and Professor Manacorda of Florence at an anti-Communist Conference held in Berlin in 1936.

Photos: Ullstein

Photo: Ullstein

HESS THE FAMILY MAN

Above: With his father and mother.

Below: His son growing up.

Photos: Ilse Hess

Above: Left, with his son Wolf Rüdiger (Buz) on his first birthday, November, 1938. Right, with wife and son on holiday.

Below: This photo of Frau Hess and their son was in the possession of Rudolf Hess during his flight to Britain.

Photos: Ilse Hess

HESS THE SOLDIER

Above: On the Douaumont fortress of Verdun after the German victory in France in 1940. In the First World War he had fought in the famous "battle of Verdun" when Marshal Pétain of France was the heroic defender.

Below: Signing autographs for German soldiers in France in 1940.

Photos: Ilse Hess

from you before I could write. However, owing to the unfathomable wisdom of unknown forces, there was always a gap of four, or even six months, between yours; so now you will understand why I was often silent for long periods.

Somewhere *en route* my correspondence piled up so that I would get a lot of letters all at once, with long gaps between. The Red Cross in Geneva helped somewhat. Letters through Zürich were usually delayed there for up to nine weeks—much to the surprise of the Swiss Ambassador whom I asked to help me to get them through. It proved that it was *not*, as was for a time alleged in England, only due to German action that these delays occurred. Since, for the greater part of my stay in England, I was "suffering from loss of memory", my laziness in letter-writing is at last explained and can be excused.

Towards the end this farce went so far that I allowed myself to be given injections against loss of memory. At first I made some resistance, but I saw there was nothing else for it if I did want to strengthen the suspicion they had that at the very least I exaggerated my trouble. Luckily, it was admitted beforehand that it was not certain the treatment would recall lost ideas. The worst of it was that as part of the treatment I was given a narcotic, and under its influence had to answer questions supposed to "re-unite the conscious and subconscious". So I was faced with a double danger: I might reveal things that, as a German, I should hold secret (very likely the intention of the instigator of the injections!); or I might let the cat out of the bag concerning my loss of memory!

In the long run, as I have said, I had to give way. But, by calling up every scrap of will-power, I managed not to lose consciousness whilst pretending to be unconscious —and they gave me more than the normal dose. To every question I simply said: "I do not know", with a pause between each word, speaking softly in a flat, absent-minded voice vvvvv. After a long time, I was able to recall my own name, which I breathed in the same flat manner. Finally, I thought it time to return to consciousness and woke up, eyes full of astonishment, to return

slowly to life. It was a real drama. Add: a *complete* success! They were now utterly convinced that my memory was quite gone.

I now began to hope that I would at last be exchanged and sent home; but it came to nothing. Yet every now and then a hint was given me that I might be allowed to go back on the next voyage of the *Drottningholm* as I think the Swedish hospital ship was called. You can imagine what that meant to me! But the ship sailed without me, and the next time, and the next time . . . and every next time.

How completely the experiment with the narcotic convinced my doctors that my loss of memory was genuine is shown by the fact that when at a later date, for special reasons of my own, I thought it best to reveal my trickery, the medical gentlemen at first refused to believe that they had been taken in. Only when I repeated to them all the questions that had been put to me when I was "unconscious" and when I played over again the comedy of "awakening", using the same mode of speech and flat voice, were they forced to admit that I had brought off a terrific "leg-pull" vvvvvv. So there can be little doubt that I did really do all that lay within my power to bring about the intervention of the gods—but the gods thought otherwise, and they must have known!

Nuremberg, 15th April, 1947

I agree with you on Houston Stewart Chamberlain's estimate of Wagner. I have been reading his *Lebenswege meines Denkens*. I cannot quite go with him when he rates Wagner equal to Beethoven as a musician, and to Shakespeare as a dramatist. But Chamberlain is a man of such formidable intellect that I am not sure by any means that it is not I who am wrong and do not understand the comparison. Besides, the many performances have left such a delightful impression that it now seems to me (as to you, too) hard to understand why we did not go to Bayreuth more often, and why I didn't give my mother the treat of going to see *Parsifal*, as Bayreuth is so near for her.

I also agree that you have to be present in Bayreuth

to get the most out of the music. The finest effect—surpassing all the others, I thought—was produced, not by *Meistersinger* but by *Tannhäuser.* Ever since I saw it performed in Bayreuth in 1930—or was it 31—with Toscanini conducting, this has stood out as one of the most wonderful experiences of its kind in my life. Yet at that time I wasn't in the best of receptive moods, not sufficiently relaxed to enjoy the anticipation or succumb to the full influence of the solemn moment when the music starts. For all this can be most impressive at Bayreuth where you get a community of kindred souls and an atmosphere is radiated back and forth between the audience and the performers. The opening hour at Bayreuth follows laws which are the exact opposite of those in other theatres and opera houses, where the artists have to work hard to get the required response from their hearers.

At any rate that is *my* opinion! And another thing: there you know you are where the Master himself worked and created the background he desired for his performances. In the intervals there is the wide view over the lonely severe heights of the Fichtelgebirge far into the horizon to keep the audience in a receptive mood.

But, as I have said, I missed much of this. I arrived hurriedly, not just at the last moment, but at the end of the first act. Of course I had to *fly* there, piloting my little Me Sports (a plucky machine but far from reliable) from Frankfort which—probably for some unimportant reason—I felt I had to take in my stride. And, of course, I worked out the flying time in minutes. After all, what would be the use of having an aeroplane and allowing a "risk margin" that brought the time to the same as for a rail journey? How could one justify the threefold coat, to oneself and the "others"? I need hardly say that the weather was shocking and I felt glad that I was able, 'though only just, to snake my way along the Main valley in the general direction of Bayreuth, scraping the fog and clouds overhead, almost colliding with the wooded heights on both sides, and never ceasing to listen anxiously to the engine. Should it fail, the machine would come down like a stone! Oh, how light-hearted and careless one was in those days!

Fortunately, no one waited for me at the other end, growing more and more cross and impatient with my craze for flying—yet, in spite of crossness, anxiety and nervous fears, possessing a touching angelic patience! Yet even without having the feeling that I was anxiously awaited, the experience was very unpleasant; but even that could not obliterate the unforgettable impression given me at Bayreuth.

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *4th May, 1947*

Geli's mother[1] has told me many touching, beautiful, brave and tragic things about the last few weeks and months of Frau Goebbels's life. A little while after my incarceration by the French on Lake Constance in May, 1945, I was visited by an elderly French officer. I had sent in a request to be allowed to communicate with you through the French occupying forces and he brought a permit with him—although I do not think you ever received the letters in England? This officer spoke very good German and we had a long conversation, in the course of which he told me that he looked upon Frau Goebbels with infinite respect. Not only had he been present at the Berlin investigations into her fate, but also he had himself aided in discovering the dead children.

As I listened to him, tears poured down my cheeks; I could not help it. And then the old gentleman said the most human and beautiful words I have heard these two years from any member of the occupation forces: "Frau Hess, you may be quite certain that you will never hear anything ugly about these people from any of us: even the enemies of your country bow their heads before the tragedy of these events!"

I must say that, in general, my experience of the gentlemen with whom I was brought into contact during the French occupation was quite good from the human angle. They were front-line officers, with the true military outlook, members of a European nation, and we found ourselves able to speak the same language. I spoke with complete sincerity and with what one of them described as

[1] Frau Hammitsch—Hitler's half-sister.

"deadly honesty". At the same time, each remained upon his own patriotic ground, but with due respect to his opposite number.

During the fourteen days that I was the guest of the French forces on the Lake, the officer in command of our women's section was a young French lieutenant: he was at first very majestic and full of dignity towards me, but I seem to possess a real talent for thawing this sort of thing on the part of my "partners" in this field. In a short time, we established a relationship which, while strictly detached, was quite bearable and polite. After one of the innumerable "interviews", to which it was his duty to escort me, I was left alone rather a long time in the room. The French military quarters lay directly on the shore of the great lake. It was May, and my gaze wandered over the blossoming trees, across the shimmering water out to the distant snow-covered mountains against a sky of soft, silky blue. I could not hold myself back: this was one of the rare moments when I lost my usual firm self-control. The tears streamed down. Suddenly, I heard the lieutenant coming back, and I succeeded in not showing him any tears, but in some way he sensed that I had been crying. He perched himself in front of me and offered me a cigarette—to soothe me vvvvvv—and asked in a rather severe manner why I'd been crying, if someone had done anything to hurt me while he was away, or if I had anything to complain about. I drew back but he became more insistent and, as I felt I might possibly break down again, I sought to save my face before this young man by growing angry. "Good God!" I said rather vehemently, "what has this to do with you? In any case, how could you understand?" "Oh, perhaps I can understand well enough—why are you so sad?" Still angry, I replied: "You could not understand anything—I weep for Germany!"

He was young enough to have been my son, and he was, after all, rather a nice fellow. He looked at me for a moment in a somewhat dumbfounded manner and then said, half in thought and half in question: "Oh! You love your Fatherland?" I felt like saying "Don't be an idiot!" but held this back and contented myself by asking if this

surprised him. After a little hesitation, he replied: "No! For I too love my country deeply."

A few minutes later, some of the officials concerned with my case came back and our rather unusual conversation ended. But from then on our relationship was never the same—at least, only outwardly. In that sense I remained the wife of the wicked Nazi minister and he the officer in charge. But there was a mutual respect. In an imponderable way, the situation was different, and it did me good.

I was held in the company of some ladies belonging to Vichy Government circles. I got to know the senior member of this group and we became friends, which made those fourteen days a privilege I shall never be able to forget, and a gain for me. She was a character of a rare and beautiful type; one of the most splendid persons I have ever known—a fanatically patriotic Frenchwoman and a friend of Germany. That was a good enough reason for sending her to prison! In contrast to not a few of the other inmates, she was treated with great respect by the French officers.

Nuremberg, 8th May, 1947

We are enjoying the warm sunshine which has come at last, and especially the sunshine during our daily period out of doors, when we can actually talk to each other! Our little circle is now enlarged through the arrival of Milch.[1]

You will be interested in the enclosed copy of entries in Halder's diary, which Speer tells me corresponds strictly to the facts.[2]

[1] Field Marshal Erhard Milch, sentenced to life-long imprisonment at a separate trial at Nuremberg, and later confined in Landsberg.

[2] The following extract from General Halder's dairy was enclosed with the letter dated 8th May, 1947:

15th May, 1941—Presentation of the facts by the Führer to the Heads of the Army:

1. The Führer was completely taken by surprise.
2. It was previously known that:
   a. Hess suffered from inner conflicts caused by his inner attitude towards England and his pain at the idea of two Germanic peoples destroying each other.

What's more, Udet, in the name of the Luftwaffe, insisted to Hitler that it was *quite out of the question* for me to arrive safely. The Führer, however, replied that he knew me, and when I got my teeth into anything of this sort I brought to bear such devotion and concentration that in this case—with all the technical and mathematical knowledge I had—he was convinced that I *would* get there all right! A little later, when the political repercussions had settled down, he was pleased with my achieve-

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b. Hess was inwardly disturbed by his exclusion from service at the front. His requests to be sent on active service had been refused.

c. He was inclined to mysticism, visions and prophecies.

d. He was so addicted to utterly reckless flying that the Führer had forbidden him to go up.

3. It has since been discovered that:

a. Since August, 1940, he issued orders that he was to be provided with regular reports on the weather over England.

b. He made attempts in Norway to get radio *Peilungen* through the station Terboven.

c. He obtained systematic training and instruction at the Messerschmitt works, after Udet had turned down his request.

d. He made systematic preparations of a technical nature for the flight (addition of extra petrol tanks).

4. Chronology:

a. Saturday. The Führer received a parcel which, at first, he set aside under the impression it contained some kind of memorandum (Note by Hess: How well I can imagine this! vvvv). Later he opened the parcel and found that it contained a letter from Hess explaining his flight and the reasons for it: Glasgow was given as the first goal, where he proposed to contact Lord Hamilton, Head of the British Legion. (Note by Hess: This is an error due to confusing the Duke of Hamilton with Sir Ian Hamilton.)

b. Examination of the documents together with the Reichs Marshal and Udet. Discussed: could the goal be reached? Agreement having been reached that England would doubtless take advantage of the incident, the first communiquê, was issued and Ribbentrop was sent to Rome to inform the Duce (of the offer of a separate peace). Reichleiter and Gauleiter summoned to conference where relevant documents were read. (Note by Hess: as a matter of fact I had left behind me a memorandum to the effect that I would say to the English that Italy must be included, as an essential condition.)

ment, mainly because he had been proved right! vvvvvvv.

By the way, they told me in England that there had been an announcement over here, possibly semi-official, in which the aeronautical and navigational achievement had secured recognition. So I was rather surprised when you told me in your letter that in Party circles they did not believe I had really flown alone. In any case, the leading English flying journal was full of praise, which naturally gave me some satisfaction, in spite of all the negative factors. There you see the sporting spirit of the *Airman's International*!

In two issues of *Baumeister* I have seen plans for the restoration of some portions of the old part of Munich, near the Kreuzkirche, near an old Bruderheim, and a portion of the Lerchenfeld palace. I was relieved to find that they were excellent. The same can be said of the plans for Frankfort and for the Reichstrasse in Donauwörth; the damage done in the latter case was very painful to me. I could really have cried with grief when I learned from the same journal that the old Town Hall in Augsburg with its Golden Hall is no more. A few days before my flight I had made one of my useless journeys to Augsburg, the flight planned for that day having been again put off by bad weather reports. Coming back from Berlin, I had broken the journey at Augsburg where, with one of my men, I visited this hall, enjoying the old town all the more for my disappointment and having of course no notion that I was seeing much of it for the last time. The thought of all the irreplaceable treasures of our civilization that were destroyed in this war—even quite apart from the loss of life—is enough in itself to tear one's heart apart.

Ilse Hess to R.H. *9th May, 1947*

Following my little account of the time in Langenargen when I was "guest of the French state" in May, 1945, I must now add a few words about the milieu. Imagine a Swabian Hausfrau, as one would expect, clean, tidy and careful to the very last degree; widow of an official who, in consequence of her ingrained way of life, had "of course" always been immovably opposed to the Third

Reich; and now, quite suddenly—by way of reward for an attitude regarded in 1945 as highly honourable—faced with the hard fact of the requisitioning by the French of her highly polished villa—within twenty-four hours flooded with a host of extremely lively French ladies plus military escorts! Thrown out of her innermost sanctuary, her own bedroom and bathroom, she was allowed, it is true, to retain her two parterre rooms and kitchen. But all the same!

I believe that my good "Madam Errlé (as she was always addressed in the sharp military voice of the lieutenant I have described to you) would have landed herself in custody for implacable resistance to an occupying power, had it not been for her good fortune in finding me also installed in the villa. As it was she put up a firm resistance against spots on her waxed stairs, and requests by the French ladies for hot water. They indeed suffered acutely, remote as they were from the conception she had built up, reducible, roughly, to its lowest terms in the words: French—Parisian—immoral. For the first twenty-four hours I looked on, speechless. Then, with the help of one of her nice daughters, I borrowed a white apron and began to act as intermediary between the nations. I heated water in the kitchen for the ladies, prepared toast for those with stomach trouble, using my own more than adequate allowance of white bread, made tea and coffee, transmitted requests from above to those below and the other way round. I also acted for them in their dealings with the little lieutenant, who had begun to develop a terrific anger against Madam; and making use of all my sense of humour, I was able to make him understand what was really the matter with her.

In this way she gradually—very gradually—adapted herself to the conditions of being "occupied" and, when I was carried off homewards and my French fellow-sufferers moved towards Paris, she was more able to face the various trials of this occupation—while for me the enforced activity helped me over the worst things of all, having nothing to do! My restless desire to be kept busy was a source of never-ending astonishment to the French guards, who

must have formed quite a different idea of a minister's wife (even an ex-minister's); but I had many a talk with them and I felt that they did not think any the worse of me for not conforming to their preconceived notion! vvvvv v. As a matter of fact it was common gossip that they had dragged me out of the cowshed when they arrested me; everybody between Bad Oberdorf and Langenargen was supposed to know this. In reality, the story was due to the ignorance of our elegant French commandant in country matters, for he had first glimpsed me in my grey linen slacks, which I usually wore around the garden, carrying a bucket in each hand. But I was really *separating* and not milking! But the picture of me in this "get up" filled his mind with doubt; he could not believe I really *was* Frau Hess, "Madam Rudolf Hess". He kept telling me, again and again, that he wished to speak to "Madam Hess" and was convinced I had not understood his request. The fact remains that my appearance must have caused a sensation that spread across country as far as the French guards on Lake Constance vvvvvvv.

Nuremberg, 14th May, 1947

In a book dealing with architecture by a neutral there is a passage in praise of A. Seifert's *Im Zeitalter des Lebendigen* (1941).. If you can't get this for me, please try to obtain the recently published work by R. Reusen: *Biologischer Wasserbau und Wasserschutz.* I should like to hand it on to Speer.

Speaking of biological hydraulics, I recollect that I once heard that, before the war, we were about to take up the old plan of a Rhine-Main-Danube canal for large vessels. Or to put it better: I knew this but I did not know that I myself had raised an objection to the proposed route—protesting on behalf of the friends of natural beauty. I must say that I now understand myself!

When I think back to the proposed line and imagine the broad, comfortable, winding course of the Waldnaab on its carefree passage through soft green meadows and quiet woods, and then imagine its ruthless replacement by the cement banks of a canal as straight as a ruler, carrying great 1,500 ton barges filled with coal, and cluttered

along its edges (one cannot call them banks) with tugging machinery, electric cables and high poles carrying current, my heart shrinks within me! How easy things are for the man whose economic capabilities are not hampered by any sentimental consideration for natural beauty! He is able to brush aside all the objections of the friends of Nature or defenders of the countryside with the remark: "Progress must not be held up by romantic arguments!"

Yet I know very well that this canal would have great economic value—in the future even more than what is imagined now by most people—and I know too what a mighty link this north-south artery would become. A problem like this confronts the responsible man with a most difficult decision; it forces him into a critical position. I must admit too that another path for the canal is not practicable. It must stick to the Waldnaab, so that its vast thirst can be satisfied on the way: The Jura has to be climbed over, which cannot be done without numerous locks; each of these uses up a lot of water, and the wastage of water increases with the amount of traffic and the size of the boats. In additions to this, a large-scale project of this sort involves the loss by seepage of vast quantities of water.

I have thought all this over carefully and wondered if it might not be possible to bore a tunnel underneath the Jura? Most of the locks would then be no longer needed, and the loss by seepage then could be made up by the Danube and from sources in the Jura above. More work would be required, but it seems probable that, in the course of time, this would be more than compensated by the resulting simplification of transport and saving of power due to the absence of locks. Further, the construction would be less expensive in labour, material and money, for the canal would be in all probability shorter. It can hardly be thought that the Waldnaab represents the shortest distance between two points. And it must be remembered that, in getting across the Jura, the canal would have to be so cut as to follow the lie of the land, avoiding going up or down the steeper declivities and

clinging to gentle slopes, whereas, if underground, it could pursue the direct line between the points in question.

The French canal between the Rhône and Marseilles harbour goes through a lengthy tunnel. With respect to the Main-Danube canal there is only one point that gives me pause and could even prevent tunnelling under the Jura, namely, that boats of 1,500 tons might require a breadth of tunnel presenting insuperable difficulties from an engineering standpoint.

I should be grateful if a specialist in such construction could give me answers to these questions. 1. Which needs the most expenditure of power, the transport of 1,000 tons by rail for a given distance, at a constant level at the same pace as a canal barge, or transport by canal—assuming that the canal was fully equipped with the best methods of tugging from the bank? With the exact figures relevant to costs of coal, oil, or electric power, placed side by side! 2. What are the real reasons for the relative cheapness of canal transport for large quantities of goods as compared with the railways?

This interests me so much because we have been discussing this matter amongst ourselves and I want to have it decided. It gave me pleasure to find that I was alone in contesting half a dozen opposed viewpoints. Pleasure, because I know that, in spite of the minority position, I am right! vvvvvv. It is really quite peculiar how few people—even among the clever ones—possess the capacity for reducing a problem to its simplest dimensions, so that the one possible answer emerges as obvious, and no more than common sense. Most people incline to make what is really simple appear complicated, thus arriving at the most extraordinarily erroneous conclusions, and sticking to them!

Can you recollect that there was a time—twenty-three years ago—when I was in prison and put forward a similar request for a decision on a technical matter? I am afraid that the opinion expressed in 1941 by one who is not now with us to the effect that "he knew me and, with my stubborn obstinacy, he was sure I would get there!" derived

from his experience of my obstinacy in such matters at that time—and from the disappointing experience that I was right after all vvvvvvvv.

Nuremberg, 22nd May, 1947

K. will be interested to hear that in the dispute over the canal business it turned out that on the question as to which needed the most power, I was "naturally" right —which was just what would have been expected vvvvvv. The other question as to why canal transport is cheaper did not play any part in the conflict which raged between us. That was added for purely personal reasons and I expected the answer that was given. I assumed it would be very difficult to find common factors for such a comparison or to decide what could properly be reckoned as expenses.

The writer of the enclosed article in *Glaser's Annalen*[1] makes the whole thing rather easy by hardly referring to these details, or even ignoring them—the wearing out of iron in railway transport, for example, and the need for replacements of wheels, rails, locomotives and trucks in proportion to the amount of hard usage, as well as the care and replacement of all sorts of points and fittings. The consumption of iron, an expensive item, is of course, far greater in railway transport than in canal work. In 1937, 38 per cent. of all the goods which enter into this calculation went by canal. We have to consider what an amount of iron would have been used up had this percentage gone by rail, and its significance in the general economy of the nation! Not a word of all this in *Glaser's Annalen.*

As an example of the relative costs, the writer in question actually brings forth statistics dating back to 1833! It would not have been possible to rake up any older figures, for before then there were no railways! At about this time the first trains snorted and puffed along only a few metres away from my present abode, at a speed of some twenty kilometres per hour—and even that was looked upon as "reckless and dangerous to health" by not a few people. In short, quite the ideal year to take

[1] A German periodical for the engineering world.

for the purpose of drawing a comparison for the year 1947—after an interval of more than a hundred years of unimaginable technical progress! Silence as to all the statistics from later years is an answer in itself.

The same story is repeated when we consider the matter of labour. Not a word from the writer; nothing but a contemptuous silence when we come to the hosts of men employed over and above those actually concerned with the transport vehicles; the men on the permanent way, at the stations, in the yards, in signalling, in shifting goods, in the locomotive sheds, not to mention the labour employed in the locomotive works, and in all the various industries essential to railways—reaching down to the coal and iron workers. In fact the whole thing is a shameless and tendentious attack upon the Autobahnen and the canal building of 1933 to '45. It fact it is so completely shameless that I feel compelled to think that there is something even more behind it—namely propaganda for the railways against all other forms of transport. Earlier the State railways brought "influence" to bear upon such publications. I know it took a long time to succeed in excluding this kind of "influence". Now there is obviously an attempt to make up for lost time.

In any case, it is useful to know that, disguised as exponents of impartial scientific knowledge contained in a work of reference, there lurk behind the scenes wolves clad in the purest sheeps wool and pursuing aims that are anything but scientific and impartial.

If it does not mean too much trouble—and only then—would K. please be so good as to let me know: First—what is the consumption of iron by the railway system in normal years of peace; by that I mean how much material is needed to maintain everything without deterioration? Second—can one safely assume that the amount of iron used up to replace the wear and tear increases in proportion to the increase in the amount of goods sent over the system (provided that no new rolling stock is required to cope with the increase?).

Do try and get me a statistical year book—even if it is an out-of-date one.

Nuremberg, 26th May, 1947

My dear Chinese girl vvvvv

Perhaps you can let me know in what respect your attitude differs from that of a Chinese wife. You are the head of a "co-operative state" vvvvv (see enclosed).[1] True, the state over which you rule is shrunk very considerably, but that does not alter the principle of the thing. Even if we leave you out, the role of the woman in our Germany, broadly speaking, corresponded with that of the Chinese woman—I say *corresponded*, because I assume that as part of the "re-education" programme, the German woman will be liberated from masculine tyranny, and her situation in life brought into line with that of American women? vvvvvvv

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *31st May, 1947*

I fear you form very little, or probably *no* idea of what it means at the present day to be the female head of a "co-operative family state", measured in terms of daily work! I believe, too, that you deceive yourself in thinking

[1] Enclosed with this letter was the following article, here abridged, on "The Dignity of the Chinese Woman" by Pearl S. Buck:

"The secret of the Chinese woman lies probably in the fact that she has always been convinced of her absolute necessity. She has never gone through a phase of imitating men. She knows herself to be far too important to think of imitating anyone else. She just went on calmly being a woman. She was not afraid of modern changes, because she never dreamed she could fail in anything. But it goes without saying that she could never have achieved this perfectly balanced personality had she not been supported and surrounded by a type of society which valued her as she was. Here we see a contrast between east and west. China always valued women as halves of a whole. The man cannot be a man unless the woman is a woman. . . . The normal Chinese household consists of different generations of the same family, who live together in a kind of 'co-operative state'. . . . In practice, the woman is the head of this state and recognized as such. Everyone has his or her place and to each she assigns the appropriate duties. . . . In China, people have more respect for the personal opinion of a woman than in any other land known to me. The Chinese man feels that his own opinions are not properly balanced if the woman's outlook is not drawn into consideration. This is mutual. It is a case of *action and reaction*, one balancing the other, and the whole filled with harmony and peace, wisdom and contentment. . . ."

that this outlook on woman's position was dominant amongst "us" in a general way; we were moving in that direction—or would have been so moving, if those in sympathy with it, like Dr. Todt, Theo and others, had prevailed, and then only. The major part was played by a tone of quite a different kind. You—yes, you indeed were different! But I fancy that even you had your times of doubt and temptation.

However, it is precisely your having gone away all alone, your "disgraceful desertion" (as they may say) of our "co-operative state" vvvvv, leaving my weak hands to hold the reins, that will one day—I hope—convince you that the policy you adopted in my case of leaving the reins very loose was the right thing. The moment you were gone I was faced with the necessity of making personal decisions and acting with independence, the significance of *your* character, with its demands for loyalty, decency, honour and truthfulness became doubly clear to me. The action and reaction of which Pearl Buck speaks in her beautiful article about Chinese women become more urgent and powerful than ever; when no longer physically present, you acted as an influence from afar.

On looking back, perhaps the spiritual demands made of me together with the physical strain were too much. I have been impatient and hard towards those who sought to give me advice for my own good when it would turn me from my own course. I do not suffer them gladly. "Wisdom and a balanced mind, peace and contentment" were not always present—how well I know that! I cherish the hope, however, that at the end of my days, I may be granted a little time, even a very little, when I can look back in peace and recognize that, at least, I made an *effort* to attain the goal of wisdom, balance, peace and contentment. Since I hardly know the meaning of the word "remorse" (I was told as a young girl that remorse was foolishness and betterment was everything) there remains no prospect of "regrets" vvvvv. That is enough of the Chinese![1]

[1] The following quotation from the polemic literature of the post 1945 period may be added by way of comment here

Photo: Ullstein

Photo: Ilse Hess

HESS AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Above: Addressing the International Conference on Homeopathy in Berlin in 1938.

Below: Visiting newly built workers' dwellings.

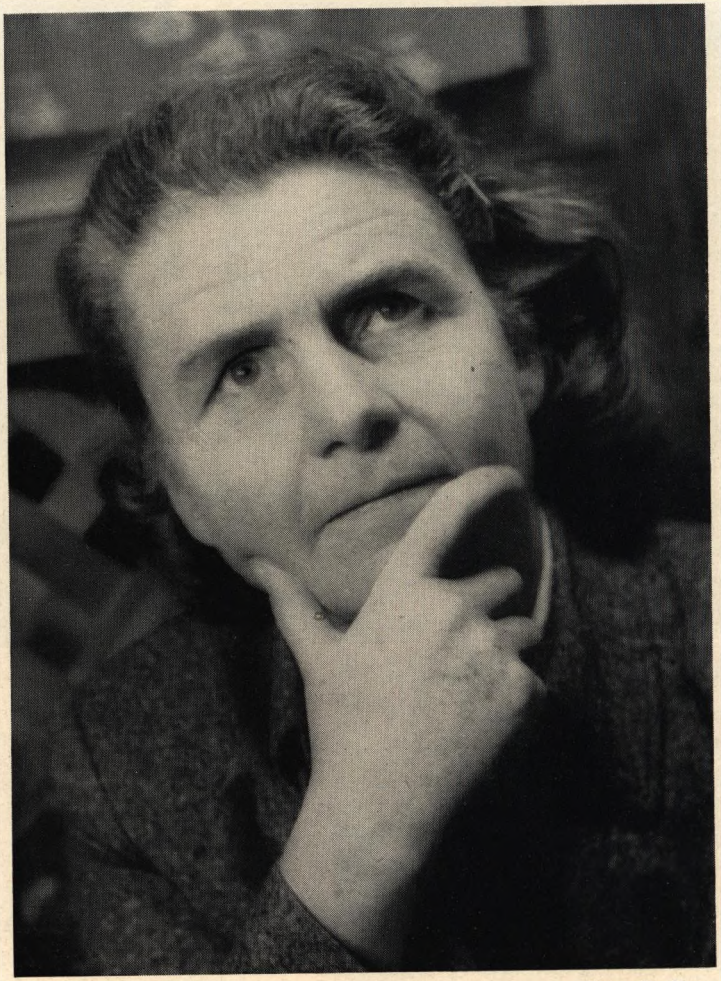

Photo: Ilse Hess

FRAU ILSE HESS TO-DAY

Did you know, by the way, that the pictures in *Zeitalter des Lebendigen*, were supplied partly by Dr. Todt? That same Dr. Todt whose all too early passing is, in my eyes, one of the tragic events contributing to the downfall. It was once said of him that he was a rare blend of a specialist of genius, a thoroughly decent fellow and an old Party comrade—God knows how true that is! The author of the above-mentioned book, who accompanied Todt on all his flights and journeys right to the end, told me then that in the last weeks of his life Todt was a man of such wonderful wisdom and so humanly perfect that, looking back, he felt that when death came to him it was a fulfilment. . . .

Some months ago in one of your letters you wrote that, beyond and above all the outer events of the last few years through the fiery trial of this Purgatorium, the spiritual element has remained and *will* remain as the sole great uniting power! I am reminded by this that our own union in its first beginnings may be said to have taken place under the star of Hölderlin. Twenty-five years ago I wrote an inscription for you in *Hyperion*:

> "How often the gardener scratches his hands with the roses that he is about to plant . . . that is the peril for those who are beloved by the heavenly powers; their love is full of power and yet tender as their spirit, while their hearts beat stronger waves even than the trident of the Sea God who is ruler of the waves . . . therefore my darling—Oh my darling!—let us beware of pride and vanity."

Underneath I added the date: 26th April, 1922.

"The relationship between Hess and his wife—a simple girl belonging to a social stratum somewhat lower than his own—was typical. She seems, on principle, to have been excluded from all public and even party offices and to have been made responsible for her Germanic sphere of domestic activity—without ever being permitted to share in the limelight of his public life. She was an unessential portion of his private life, within the limits of which he could be amiable and considerate. It was the marriage of a completely egocentric person—it was typically German." From I. R. Rees *The Case of Rudolf Hess* (Note by Ilse Hess).

Nuremberg, 4th June, 1947

My very dearest love.

I have just learned of your arrest. At once I asked Dr. Seidl to take over your case and to come and see you himself.

Your arrest is only what I have long expected; and I was fully prepared for it. In fact I am prepared for anything and nothing can surprise me. Nevertheless my feelings when I heard of this were such that I need not and indeed *will* not put them down in writing. But I should like to tell you about my conception of personal honour, as held for many years: the honour of an individual cannot be injured, or even touched, by any acts or expressions on the part of another. He who attempts this does an injury to his own honour. Honour can suffer solely as a result of dishonourable conduct on the part of the individual himself. Accordingly, many things that might well get on the nerves of others pass me by.

Since you now find yourself in a situation in which your own acts and all attempts to steer your own course must be confined within very narrow limits, I will again remind you of an idea of which I have often spoken: there are events which take their course upon a level where we cannot exert any influence, or at times when we must be left out because, not being able to anticipate them, we are always too late. . . .

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess

Present address: The Labour and Internment Camp at Goggingen, nr. Augsburg, Barracks 5, Room 5.
7th June, 1947

When I was in the prison at Sonthofen the loneliness proved difficult; but now, taking into account my liking to be alone which I have always had with me from birth and in an intensified form during the last few years—my greatest trouble is never being able to be alone, but having the enforced company of sixteen fellow-victims. However, one gets used to everything, as we all know. To-day the

radio was blaring, the whole room hummed with talk, and the doors banged, etc. etc. But I slept!

Further, *comradeship* outweighs a hundred times the unfavourable aspects of the present situation; and in this respect as far as one can judge after a few days, I have good luck, since I seem to have been placed in the most friendly room that has been known here for a long time—but a new influx is announced vvvvvv. The mixture is wonderful. We are commanded by the oldest inhabitant, quite democratically as she is also the oldest in years. She is small and delicately made with a deep masculine voice, comes from the world of Munich Bohemianism and smokes like a chimney. There are a few women of about my own age; and then eight boisterous lasses, all of whom have been "inside" for two and a quarter years—crazy but true!—and in spite of that have not lost their humour or good behaviour. An impudent died-in-the-wool Berlin creature, whose tricks and pranks keep us all going; a little girl from Dessau, as pretty as a picture—these stand out so far to my eyes, but I truly believe that every branch of what was once our German fatherland is represented.

My special favourite is a sixty-three-year-old Munich woman, full of wit and worldly wisdom; she even knows Harlaching and once polished *your* desk in the Brown House! I try to stop her doing all sorts of things for me. It would never do to let her, because people would say, "Look at that snooty Frau Hess letting herself be waited on!"—the last thing I want! True—*my* room would not talk like that, but there is not the same comradeship throughout. Oh! Women! Maybe I will have to forestall any accusation of "snootiness" by taking over the "post" of closet-cleaner, if no one else comes forward, which hasn't happened yet. . . .

I can't yet bear to think of our son. For, ever since my case first came before the Sonthofen tribunal, I have been firmly convinced that even if I had been an angel from above as white as snow instead of one of the earliest Party members, I would still be compelled to spend a good while here; if not for one reason, then for another, both before and after the verdict. So the thought of the

little chap gives me no small anxiety. The good boy— he was so plucky when I was arrested! Next week I hope he will be able to come and see me with Auntie Inge. I must admit that now I begin to understand better why you always rejected the idea of a visit from us. It is, at bottom, nothing but a devilish form of torture, even though the conditions for receiving visitors here are not unacceptable.

Nuremberg, 10th June, 1947

No one understands better than I do that, even were it possible, you would not write every day! Not only would I be unable to do the same, but also I should not feel it really right. Like other things, letters are subject to the law of diminishing value when in large supply. They tend to become mere matter-of-course, no longer anything special, and their contents too largely composed of petty daily affairs.

Now and then I read the *Frankenpost*, a local paper, and various others as they come my way—papers of all sorts from all the Zones representing every shade of what is now called "opinion". Without any request on my part, the Chaplain brought me *Time*, *Newsweek* and other similar journals. As they were, so to speak, thrust into my hands, there was no call to bother about "fundamentals". I just read what there was to read and grinned to myself at the cleverly disguised propaganda in the journals of the Occupation, and grinned even more at the much less clever propaganda in our own papers. Meanwhile, it had been suggested to me that I might like to send a written request to an American officer to have these journals sent regularly to me. However, I turned the idea down and do not feel called upon to bother my head further with the matter.

By the way, you are unjust to a certain portion of our people in going by what the Press reports. You can be quite sure that many of those who are faced with what they are *alleged* to have said will open their eyes as wide as you do when confronted with some strange version of your own utterances.

Once indeed, when I was a "guest" in England, I read an interview with you apparently soon after your experience as a "guest" of the French and illustrated with your "Zugspitz-flight" face;[1] and I could see this was not falsified, for what stood there as your utterance was quite genuine vvvvvvvv.

Nuremberg, 21st June, 1947

To-day the new chaplain brought me your letter of the 16th. I am very sorry you had received nothing from me up to then, although I am not surprised. In all these small things I am a pessimist, confirmed by experience. Actually, I wrote at once when the news of the arrest of "prominent women" came out in the Press. . . .

My comrades are filled with a vain optimism following upon the "acquittal" of Frau Sauckel; but I will not try to conceal from you that I take a very different view. My experience suggests that, here again, hopes are aroused in order that afterwards the harsh reality will prove more hard to bear and the disappointment all the more bitter. Moreover, an acquittal at the beginning makes a good impression in foreign countries, where your arrest does not meet with universal approval. In your case in particular, I see things at their worst, because—in this matter vvvv—you have been unlucky enough to be my wife. In any case, I am thinking there will be some kind of penalty. Put a good face on it.

Nuremberg, June 26th, 1947

Your last letter made me more concerned for your plight—especially because of the vast assortment of the all-too-feminine which crowds in upon my little wife, herself so capable and preferring men's serious conversation! However, this sort of thing must be reckoned as one of the agents by which an inscrutable providence works in

[1] This refers to a race for sporting aeroplanes round the Zugspitze in 1934, won by my husband. I waited for him after the achievement —most unusual for a Minister of State—and greeted him on the aerodrome, in the highest spirits.

—Ilse Hess.

purifying us—and, with us, so many others of our poor nation—all for some good reason we cannot fathom.

About the conduct of your case: It does not matter in the least by whom you are represented or if anyone represents you, whether you are taken to see Seidl or decide not to see him. Nor will it make any difference what you say or how you say it, whether you fly into a temper, turn sullen, or maintain a silence like that of an Egyptian tomb before it has been opened to enjoy the benefits of our civilization. All the various modes and types of defence matter only so far as the *outside* public is concerned, if they are not too drastically "cut" in the Press, or distorted, like my own final words before the court, which made me smile when I saw them in print.

Nor will it make the slightest difference if witnesses appear on your behalf and speak with the tongues reputed to be proper to angels. You must remain equally indifferent if witnesses are called *against* you to swear to evidence that is pure fiction, as happened in many cases (that can be proved) in the great process itself. False evidence moreover counts for nothing; it can do no more than impart a more or less decorous appearance to a *show* of justification for the sentence. Even if no false evidence were given, the result would be exactly the same. I tell you all this so that you may be prepared and, when the time comes, be able to take it all with the same sense of humour you showed about the statement of the prosecution. It is your *inward* attitude that will count.

Above all, never forget what I wrote to you about personal honour. You must attain to the point when you can take everything that comes with an inward smile—and then shake it off you with the feeling "That's that!". The decent people in the outer world (and who else matters?) do not, in spite of all, believe in this nonsense. The others need not bother us; for them a bit more falsification or a little less, and what is the difference? Nothing can stop the victory of truth when the time is ripe.

Concerning the judgment to be expected, for once I do not stand alone. Dr. Seidl takes precisely the same view: that you are my wife, that you were one of the earliest

Party members, that you held the Golden Badge of Honour, not as an ornament but because you had been a member from the beginning—all that will be quite enough to get you a term in prison no matter how the trial will go, and quite apart from anything to do with your attitude or any statements by the defence. Seidl and myself differ on one point only: he thinks it possible that the sentence may be considered served whilst awaiting trial. However, we shall see what we shall see!

Meanwhile, we may have to go through some more difficult times; but that, too, is part of what fate has in store for us. If in consequence the boy is separated from your influence for a few months, this must not be taken too tragically. He has such good stuff in him that this experience will not decisively influence his future. The grave troubles that have fallen to his lot, also, in early years, will counteract other influences and tend to the good. This or that tendency which may not be quite what we should desire will be ironed out as he grows older. I think I remember writing to you from England about a family I knew who, on principle, left their children to themselves, influencing them as little as possible—even taking little notice of real naughtiness—and the experiment turned out extraordinarily well.

After all, you have laid a sound foundation: seven years, not reckoning the earliest, with *such* a mother. That will yield lasting results—believe me! vvvvvvv.

To sum up: The defence is a matter of indifference. All sorts of incomprehensible charges will be trumped up, and very possibly equally incomprehensible statements will be made by witnesses. The verdict will be detention of some kind. That is not important. The main thing is that you should be prepared from the very beginning to look upon the whole affair as a theatrical performance. Theatre, theatre, nothing but theatre! But *not* with a tragic end.

Remember me to all those who send greetings! All of us here are, in thought, very much with our "poor womenfolk", and this is more especially true of me in regard to you.

Nuremberg, 6th July, 1947

"When young, we think that the very least that humanity can do for us is to give us justice. When old, we find out that it is the greatest gift of all." (Ebner Eschenbach.) We do not look for this great gift from the judges of this earth at the present time. For, as Schiller said: "None can give more than he possesses in himself."

You will have heard about the verdict in the case of Frau Winifred Wagner. What do I keep on saying? What could be produced in her case that was really punishable? That she belonged to the Party? That she supported it? Neither of these things is a crime according to law—more especially according to the law as envisaged in democracies! Yet they have to stick to the concept of legality, for how else can they maintain that their proceedings have some connection with law in a "free democratic state". Frau Wagner fought with that courage so characteristic of her against abuses; she successfully espoused the cause of people in concentration camps—and not a few have to thank her for their very lives. Members of the Social Democratic and Communist parties have themselves born witness to this. What was the result? She was found guilty. Nay, more—the prosecuting counsel appealed against the sentence on the grounds that it was too light.

What is the lesson to be drawn? You will know what to expect in all probability, although your circumstances—the fact that you have had little income since 1941 and none at all since 1944, whereas Frau Winifred Wagner inherited something considerable—may influence a lighter sentence. On the other hand, you were practically never able to exert any influence on behalf of persons arrested. So long as I was at home you were hardly in a position to take up causes and get me interested—thanks to my rigorous rule of keeping political and private matters strictly apart. Had you taken any such initiative, you would probably have got the answer: "Oh, my Chinese woman, head of the 'co-operative family state', please look after these things and leave my affairs alone!" Isn't that true? vvvvvvv

You could have made attempts of this sort only after my flight—an additional reason for this being that only then did circumstances give rise to abuses that would bring you face to face with injustice and ill-treatment. But if you're out of favour yourself you can do more harm than good to those you try to help. You could hardly have done anything more detrimental to those who had been arrested; for I learn through tales told by my comrades that you yourself were continually hovering on the edge of a concentration camp, because of your fearless honesty and courage. I have told you again and again that, had you been a soldier, your incorrigible obstinacy and contrariness would have kept you in a more or less permanent state of "confined to barracks". Nowadays I can't help laughing when I think of those times, because I feel sure that between 1941 and '45 you must have done everything possible to get yourself "confined to barracks"!

These are all demonstrable reasons why it will be no use for you to rely in any way upon the testimony of witnesses for whom you have at one time or another done something useful. But what do reasons matter? The court will pay no attention to anything, save the fact that you did not actually take any such steps. . . .

The fact remains that you will continue to suffer loss of freedom—whether you are suspected of trying to escape, or because documents are missing—anything will do. I tell you all this in advance, and you will see that I am right—just as if I were a real prophet. If it was solely a question of the will of those who now feel called upon to decide our fate for us you would have no chance of ever regaining your liberty. For the time being that is how things will go—for the time being! For, in the long run, it is not the will of the plaintiff that can decide everything:

> "We must all of us fulfil the cycle of our
> life within the great, the iron eternal laws."

Where the eternal unalterable laws which apply to your life will finally lead you—that alone is the truly decisive thing. . . .

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *Göggingen, 13th July, 1947*

Your letter of 26th June is the latest to reach me so far. . . . What you say of the purely juridical aspect of the case is completely in accordance with my own belief. You need not worry; you may be sure that nothing will take me by surprise and it will not be easy for anything to upset me.

It was only the first forty-eight hours of my sudden separation from our boy that did something to my self-possession. I could not help seeing that, in spite of all his silent courage, his eyes grew so large and pitiful. When it came to the journey from the prison to the camp I praised him for this (I was able to see to it that the exact time of the transfer could be communicated to Hindelang) and told him to be just as brave again. He said that on the evening when the police came to take me away from home, he managed to get away for a few minutes and hide in the pantry to cry secretly—not amongst the others—and no one noticed anything!

When I think of things like this, I must admit that even now I have my moments of weakness, but always and *only* in regard to Buz. I have to tell you that. Then I plunge straight into some work and manage to get over it well enough; that is my way. . . .

We have just completed a great removal of the women's camp from one end of the big camp to the other. Now there is room for our young people to be on their own, leaving only eight of us older and more "settled" women —some really elderly. Yet we often carry on so that no one could believe we were not teen-agers! How I wish that, instead of a letter, I could send you now and then a recording of our conversations here; you would laugh until the tears came. The various characters we have amongst us are all quite different, but most of them are real "originals". I still like best the old Munich woman I told you about in my first letter, whose truly hair-raising case was described to you by chaplain Achtermann. The more one knows her the more one discovers her store of mother-wit, human experience, humour and kindness, so that one hardly knows whether to laugh at her or just like her. Just now she spent nearly an hour in telling us

all about her experiences as a seller of sardine sandwiches at the Munich October fête, and we really had to beg her to stop, or we should die of laughing. She had travelled, peddling different things on bicycle and otherwise, all through Germany, and she relates her adventures, so rich in human interest, with overwhelming liveliness and drollery.

Nuremberg, 15th July, 1947

The other day the chaplain told me you had sent him an anxious express letter, because you had heard that we had been taken away to Spandau. He said he had at once replied to you by wire, which I think was truly friendly and nice of him!

The inventors of these atrocity stories believe, I am sure, that even if their tales are not confirmed, they will gradually serve to break down our nerves and yours. Whether mine have been thus broken down or not needs no answer from me vvvvvvv!

Writing thus, I do not mean that we may not go to Spandau one fine day. I am reckoning with it; and I wish you would contemplate this transference with a smile, as I do, whenever it may actually take place. I must admit, however, that this is very difficult for you, since your belief in the inevitability of fate is not so absolute and unshakable as mine, and thus your attitude towards the question of my removal must be fundamentally different. But, believe me, neither ministers with special powers, arbitrary judges, nor Allied courts of Russian commissars can make our fate. That belongs solely to ourselves—to accept it for what it is, and through acceptance to shape it.

3—SPANDAU

(AUGUST 1947—DECEMBER 1951)

Spandau, 3rd August, 1947

This is my first letter from our new quarters. They are not, in any fundamental sense, different from the old ones. In certain less important respects, as always seems to be

the case after a change of abode, they are less "agreeable" but on the other hand they have "advantages". In the former category ranks the fact that we are not allowed to send a letter, such as I now send, more than once in 28 days. I realized in Nuremberg that I would not be allowed to go on writing so frequently and looked upon the fact that I was able to do so as signifying some change before long. In this same 28 days we may receive not more than *one* letter, but at present there is no limit as to length. Conditions: it must be written clearly in Latin characters! . . . My number is now the lucky seven!

There is a positive side, however: The "rooms" are newly painted and fresher and cleaner. And just imagine, I have a pillow, one with a pillow case, and a mattress covered with white linen—the first seen since I left England! Again, I possess a chair and need no longer pretend that the edge of the bed is a sofa. A drawback is that the white linen covering of the mattress means more trouble washing—and we have to do that ourselves! vvvvv.

Yesterday for the first time I was in the line-up for washing, with Doenitz. I imagined myself as Gudrun by the shores of the North Sea, but she, I am sure, breathed an air with more ozone in it. How we scrubbed, soaped, rinsed and wrung out! We did our level best. But I fear that a good housewife would have cast despairing and pitying glances to heaven, to see our methods.

In fact our present profession carries with it all sorts of activities! Our education as market gardeners makes rapid progress. It is voluntary, but we all take part. True, this progress is very irregular because there are so many gaps in our knowledge. With some guidance from the French guard—who presumably retired as a rentier at the age of around forty and now potters about in his little plot for the benefit of Madame's kitchen—I am already quite an expert in tomato growing. I know which shoots to nip off, which leaves to take away and which not, and that when the stems of pruned shoots are stuck into the ground the moisture is retained better, so the unwanted parts convert themselves gradually into good manure. . . .

Our removal here was quite sudden. In the very early

morning at the first cockcrow we were awakened with the interesting news—just as I had told my comrades would happen, although not one of them believed me! Since we are not burdened with the sort of valuables that can be eaten by moths or corrupted by rust, it did not take us long to pack up. . . .

Now we shall calmly await what may happen to us—as we did before. Or at least I shall do so without necessarily going to the extreme of the fakir who perceives his mission and happiness to consist in holding one arm upright day and night. In a mental and spiritual sense, I sometimes feel rather like that myself, but only sometimes . . . from that state I am far removed vvvvvvv.

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *Göggingen, 3rd September, 1947*

Not only have I got your first letter from Spandau, but also an extremely "witty" reporter has already written something about your arrival there, saying (which soothed me a good deal) that you were the most cheerful inmate of the new abode besides being the one who wrote "tender" letters to his wife—adding that you made use of little wavy lines vvvvvv to indicate a pause for laughter! vvvvv vvvvvv vvvvvv. You see this makes me laugh like anything, by post! Who would have thought that the good old Hess "laughter-line" would attain to fame in the newspapers? Not even in the long years when you were in England, when it proved the cause of two important visits paid to me . . . they felt sure I must be "up to something" vvvvvv that I was attempting, impudently, to communicate with you by some secret code or other!

That you are cheerful we knew—thank God—from your letter! For the removal to Spandau made us feel rather sceptical, in spite of everything. But meanwhile the chaplain Achtermann came to see us and told me about the last talk with you on the evening before you left. This conversation with Achtermann proved, for various reasons, to be memorable—and not only because of the joy of hearing about you direct. To go into that would take us too far afield—"into a wide field" as old Briest in Fontane would say. You told me that, when in England, you

read a lot of Fontane, and you, too, will be able to wander in this "wide field" at least in spirit. . . .

Spandau, 5th October, 1947

. . . I am not surprised that my tomato pruning caused you amusement. In between, I did some tobacco pruning too. As a non-smoker, I found it rather unfair that I should be expected to look after and gather these plants, so that the slaves of nicotine can fill themselves with poison. On the top of that, it is said that the good old "Uckermarker", in its mixed state, can bowl over the strongest man. In my mind, I saw a picture from our old geography book, "Tobacco harvest in Mexico"; but I was myself the figure in the book! All that was lacking was a Mexican straight hat, looking like a huge convolvulus vvvvv.

Now I know, for the first time, how far apart carrots should be set; and that one should thin them out very small. At the same time I proved that the tiny plants can be transplanted—after being told by our specialists in high-class gardening that this was impossible! I have watched the growth of onions, cucumbers, pumpkins, cauliflowers, celery and kohl-rabi; and for the first time gathered walnuts from a tree—in fact tens of thousands altogether from more than a dozen heavily bearing trees in the garden. How one's hands are stained from opening the unripe shells!

We have cleared an area of some nine thousand sq. metres of a positive jungle of weeds, undisturbed for years and reaching to our thighs and higher. The roots were pulled up, turned over and partly made into beds; we sweated like niggers. At the same time, almost every day we watered the new beds. This was a very creditable performance for seven men, two of them over seventy years old. We sowed winter cabbage, endives and radishes in new beds. With the latter, on my suggestion born of my miserly instinct, we put in each seed separately. After all, we have plenty of space and time and few seeds. vvvvvv.

The only one of us who knows anything about the job

is our doyen, Herr von Neurath; and, for this reason, we made him Head Director of Garden Operations. On his part he stuck to the methods of Monsieur Petit, known to you already from my account of my tomato growing.

The mental activities balancing this outdoor work have been divided between Heinrich Seidel's *Leberecht Huhnchen* and Ranke's *Männer und Zeiten*—quite in keeping with the atmosphere of Monsieur Petit, as he peacefully planted his cabbages in a Parisian suburb.

This reminds me: For the time being, do not send me anything of Treitsche's, for he has received the honour of being placed upon the list of forbidden books (for Berlin at least).

I was glad to hear that Chaplain Achtermann's visit pleased you. But I do not really believe he will come here, no matter how much he might wish to do so! There would be so much we could talk about without ever getting anywhere.

Spandau, 23rd November, 1947

Yesterday I received the things I left behind in England; first and foremost my books to the number of no less than some hundred and twenty, embracing a wide field, from Kolbenheyer's *Bauhutte*, the *Versuch eine Metaphysik* to the *Heiden von Kummerow*! In between, the whole of Goethe, Ranke's Päpste, and many others, light and heavy, that you sent me. Most of them I read through and through during my monastic existence in England, so that they can hardly be of much use for present reading; but they are a blessing for my comrades. They form the foundation of a little library that is now being built up, with Raeder as Librarian. From this library I borrowed Ranke's *Männer und Zeiten* and Erich Mark's *Otto von Bismarck*, so that there is no need for you to send me these.

My mother will be interested to know, as I was myself, that Ranke gives a picture of Frederick the Great wholly different from that generally accepted concerning his religious attitude. Most people think of him as an atheist. It seems, however, that this is quite false. In *one* thing he was immovable. He vehemently objected if

anyone threw doubts upon his faith in a living God. He was wont to repeat, with the utmost conviction, the current proofs of the existence of God, especially those based upon the wisdom of the natural order. "I do not know God, but I pray to Him" he would say. He had complete confidence in a providence that guided his destiny. Like so many other great men, he saw in troubles given him to bear, the inescapable burden assigned to those chosen for great things. I once read that one of his contemporaries, in whose house he slept during one of his campaigns, reported that he heard Frederick groaning as he lay restless in bed: "My God, My God! What great thing now have you in store for me?"

In his practical life, old Fritz made use of the two main tendencies in the philosophy of the ancient world: when things went well, he was an epicurean; but when misfortune threatened, he became a stoic, as once he smilingly admitted to his sister, the Countess of Bayreuth. Not a bad system! Myself—I am a stoic in the first place.

There comes to mind a saying put into the mouth of Julius Caesar by Shakespeare. It may be hackneyed, but none the less it's worth repeating: "Of all the wonders that I yet have heard, it seems to me most strange that men should fear; seeing that death, a necessary end, will come when it will come." Oh, Shakespeare, what is *not* to be found there? I have been reading Hamlet again and letting it sink in: ". . . Rightly to be great is not to stir without great argument, but greatly to find quarrel in a straw when honour's at the stake".

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess Göggingen, 10th December, 1947

Your prophesies regarding the length of my involuntary stay in the sanatorium are being gradually fulfilled. Thank God, I never thought otherwise myself, so that at least I have no disappointment to bear! Since I wrote last two colleagues have been released; but as to Frau Goering and myself, my views are pessimistic. Up to now I have never lost my sense of humour; but my colleague is ill. Moreover she has been through more than I have in the last two years, so that she is not so disposed to see

the humour of the situation. But she is plucky and quiet in mind.

I have so much to do that I really have no time for stupid thoughts. Thanks to my knowledge of typing, I am now the secretary for all questions relating to "leave" vvvvv for the women's camp. Really, this is an excellent occupation, for I have to examine the sad histories of all these women and cannot therefore look upon my own case save with indifference. Frequently my time is rather too fully taken up, especially just before Christmas, when all sorts of other jobs are placed upon my shoulders, as one who is held to be much versed in all Christmas affairs. Buz is now with me[1]—which means endless joy for him and myself. But it means some extra work for me.

A few days ago when he was sitting on a heap of straw sacks quite near to me, he began to cry bitterly. In reply to my horrified question as to what was the matter, he let out that he wanted very, very much to have Daddy in the men's camp. His friends over there called him the "little ferry-boat", a kindly Commandant having provided him with a general pass, so that he could go hither and thither between one inmate and another, passing backwards and forwards as he liked. It seemed to him utterly monstrous that even then he would be only some of the time with you and some of the time with me; although for my part I know well that I should see little of him, for his urge towards male conversation is very strong. When he is so happy with all the strange "uncles" in the camp, how much more so would he be with you—Ah me!

He has learned how to make lots of pretty things in the workshop where he is just now; and, if we could only send it, you would get a nice little box made from an old American Army preserve tin but hammered out and punched into shape by your son. It is truly astonishing what charming things can be made in this way; all the women who come to us from the camp at Ludwigsburg—especially the girl leaders in the Bund deutschen Mädels—

[1] The Commandant of the camp had granted a limited permit for my ten-year-old son to stay with me for a few weeks.

brought heaps of these made in their camp. Their rooms look like old-style peasants' cottages, with all the pewter and tin things. I was told that the guards often shook their heads in half reluctant admiration at the incomprehensible cleverness of the Germans in making so much from so little! . . .

Spandau, on the first day of the Christmas holidays, 1947

Since you mention my report on the flight to England, I assume that my letters *did* reach you in the long run! . . . I do not feel at all sure why my "second fainting fit" should have caused you to shudder after reading about it.[1] That was when I hung in the parachute. In such a position one is quite powerless and delivered over to chance—in the most literal sense of the term! Even when landing, one can do very little; with beginners there is no little danger of an attack of cramp, which can lead to twists and sprains or broken limbs. But by being unconscious I was kept in a relaxed state. The critical, and more than critical, moment of unconsciousness was when I sat at the controls, which I could no longer operate, so that both the machine and myself were at the mercy of chance—or what is commonly called chance!

As for the alleged "breaking my leg" on landing, that is not correct. When I was flung out of the machine, I was thrown with great force against a part of the tail, which I struck with my right foot just below the ankle, practically the pulse of the foot, so to speak; and the contact with another object so much harder than itself caused such a terrific extravasation of blood that my leg turned black and violet up to beyond the knee. I had to lie down for three weeks and could do no more than limp about for another five. All the same, I have reason to be grateful to this injury, for that very night I was taken to a small hospital in Glasgow, after having first of all been shut up very kindly in a regular prison cell in the city. For at that time I was still sensitive about such a relatively trivial matter vvvvv. This hospital still remained intact after

[1] See page 35.

the last air raid, but the debris of surrounding buildings was hardly likely to ensure a comfortable feeling about the next attack by the Luftwaffe. However, the Duke of Hamilton, after coming to see me, took care that I was transferred to a proper war hospital. This lay in the country, about half an hour's run from the city, and commanded a lovely view of the peculiarly charming hills and mountains of the Scottish scene, with their ever changing colouration.

After fourteen days I was taken to London in a sleeping car and placed at first in the officers' quarters by the White Tower—a huge towerlike building which seemed to me to have been built in the eleventh century. The little house and also, apparently, a portion of the furniture were seventeenth century—quite charming!

The utter senseless destruction of priceless ancient buildings and other treasures of our civilisation, both here and back in Germany, is an immeasurable loss. I think of it often and it always fills me with deep grief.

* * * *

I am very pleased, Buz, my lad, that you are learning to make all sorts of lovely things with your hands, such as metal work. Mind you learn all that you possibly can! If you learn as a kind of play, as now with your mother in the camp, so much the better. Perhaps soon you will be able to make nice little cooking ranges like those you saw, as you told me in your letter, in the men's camp. You could make them for your little girl friends at home in the Ostrachtal; later they will do for your own little daughters vvvvv.

And chess—you want to learn that too! Splendid. But don't forget that you need a bit of brains to do that. I learned when I was twelve, with your Uncle Alfred, then a year younger than you are now. Both of us had scarlet fever and, even when much better, could not mix with other children for quite a long time. Our boredom was such that our poor mother was almost worried to death, until she hit upon the idea of the royal game of chess, which we played for hours every day. I got on so well

that, when I was in the hospital of St. Quentin during the first world war, I was the only one to defeat the Berlin crack player, Cohn, who took on twelve opponents at once. This gives me pleasure, even to-day! vvvvv. You might do worse than tread in my footsteps.

Last night I thought of you a lot, with your picture in front of me; very large and real. And, in my mind, I saw side-by-side with it, amongst other things, your mother's head, her hair light and fair like your own. A few days ago was the twentieth anniversary of our formal engagement—how time slips past!

* * * *

To-day, after the mid-day meal, Funk played Christmas songs, variations on Volkslieder, Beethoven and Schubert on the harmonium which we have in the "Church Room". The music was wafted into my cell where I sat in solitary enjoyment. In our position, good music does not make the heart lighter; but it was beautiful. The day will come when I will again listen to music with you—with my own —and that will be still more beautiful.

Spandau, 18th January, 1948

At the end of May, in 1941, I lived for a short time —as I have already told you—in an officer's room in the Guards' barracks near the White Tower in London. Looking out of the window, I could see the English guardsmen doing their daily drill with endless endurance and a precision that would have done credit to Prussians, accompanied by resounding music. I could have managed very well, however, without the bagpipes—and so could many of the English, as they told me! But the Scottish officers whom I met were as proud of their national music as they were of their whisky vvvvv; and were easily inclined to be offended by any criticism of the bagpipes.

After this intermezzo in the barracks I was taken in a hospital car, lying down, all through London to a villa in Mychett Place near Aldershot which was to be my home for over a year. There I was surrounded by large sweet-

smelling glycineas, while magnificent rhododendrons of all colours flowered in the garden. Had it not been a prison with plenty of barbed wire and sentries to protect me from the hostile public, I could very well have been satisfied. The dining-room and the music-room, as at home at Harlashing, were on the ground floor and opened into the Park. The Commandant, a professional artist in peace-time and a true artist by nature, played Mozart with the most beautiful delicacy. Outside were warm summer nights, while my heart was filled with pain, although I could not guess how long all would last and what lay in front of me. More by far than you can realize even to-day!

At the end of June, 1942, I was taken by car to a hospital near Abergavenny in Wales, fifty miles north of Cardiff. I wrote to you once from there describing the peculiar beauty of the district, especially the astounding play of colour on the hills and mountains and the ever-changing effects of light.

The doctors who were in charge of me there were men of a specially nice type: one a highly educated, frail-looking, somewhat singular person; the other more robust. Both were men of many-sided interests, with whom one could carry on intelligent conversation. The latter came from the neighbourhood and sometimes gave us specimens of the strange Welsh language which, when sung on the radio, was very reminiscent of German.

With Abergavenny as a base, I took short and long walks and occasionally motor trips further afield. Not very far away is the White Castle, a well-preserved large castle, with five immense round towers in the surrounding wall. It dates from the eleventh or twelfth century, and looks exactly what I thought a medieval castle should be, when I was a boy! In the courtyard of the castle, a most carefully tended lawn, and around it, between the wall and the moat, ancient trees and a multitude of flowering shrubs, such as lilac and elder. Several times I paid a visit to Llanthony Abbey, a Gothic church now in ruins, save for the aisle which is intact in parts. The church was probably sacrificed to the destructive fury of Cromwell.

I can well understand that English people do not like to be reminded of their "Ironsides"; their feelings in this respect are very mixed. Thus—as I soon became aware—it was not tactful to draw parallels between Cromwell and a certain other person.[1]

This district is, like nearly the whole of England, a huge park; although here in Wales this impression is somewhat diminished by the grim-looking hills, usually bare of trees and often covered with crumbling stones. How often I yearned for great stretches of real forest, as we have them in Germany! I felt rather like a man who is fed all the time on super-refined foods and longs for good solid country food—such as pork and dumplings vvvv—or one who would prefer honest black bread to a diet of cakes and biscuits.

In the areas that are ploughed up for crops, hedges surround the fields and border the roads. This is a real land of hedges, such as might have been planned and planted by *Zeitalter des Lobendigen.* The hedges consist of blackberry bushes and small hazelnut trees, together with a good deal of white and red hawthorn, and wild roses mixed with all sorts of bushes not known to me. I gathered large quantities of blackberries for weeks during the summer; I might be said to have made a "blackberry cure"! Nobody in the district bothers to pick them, for they have enormous masses of such things. Nor did I neglect the hazelnuts, which were also ignored and left to anyone who cared to take them.

A thing that pleased me very much was the wide-spread love of great old trees, which were often preserved, even when no more than hollow stumps. They told me about a small farmer who sold his farm at a low price on condition that an old tree that stood there should never be cut down.

The behaviour of the people I met on my walks was, with very few exceptions, beyond reproach. In the villages and small towns through which I had occasion

[1] The "certain other person" is Hitler, obviously a false parallel when one considers that the British regicide had far more in common with the Soviet leaders in the modern world. Ed.

to pass, the inhabitants would run to their doors to gaze at the German who had come down to them from the sky; but they were often quite friendly, and one of the officers who had been assigned to me informed me that large numbers of the population had hoped that my mission would be successful and the war brought to an end—that would have been splendid!

The first book given me to read, whilst over there, was the novel, *Königsmarck*, when I was in the hospital outside Glasgow. I once saw you with a translation of it, so it seemed to me a tiny mental link with you. The matron gave it to me when I left; but, oddly enough, it was not amongst the books sent on to me from England. So I lost this souvenir.

In response to a request of mine, the Duke of Hamilton kept for me a bit of the wrecked Me 110, together with the parachute. I hope, in spite of all, that on the "appointed day" I shall again see these mementoes of an "indiscretion that can serve us well"!

In addition to the books you sent me from time to time, I would get books out of the lending library, all of them in English. I studied the First World War—more especially from the English angle—so thoroughly that I have really become quite an expert. Military reading was supplemented by political: Grey's memoirs, the voluminous work of Lloyd George and, naturally, Churchill. But, above all, I studied everything written by Jellicoe, which I had always wanted to do, in order to enlarge my collection of books on the Skaggerak battle. . . .

* * * *

Here, too, we have been able for some time to draw upon books from a library in the city. After studying those which were on loan, as against those I *wanted*, I thought of the English library with gratitude. For example, here, books dealing with the First World War are virtually unobtainable—possibly from a notion of eliminating any warlike mentality even among men surrounded by thick walls and armed guards! Accordingly, I read books dealing with the Middle Ages, not apparently at all dark

or warlike when compared with our own times. I even go back as far as Caesar, Pericles, and Homer's *Odyssey*; the latter in the translation by Voss. It was certainly high time I steeped myself in the oldest classics, for I am ashamed to say that I had never read the *Odyssey* all through—only extracts for use in schools in the blessed days of boyhood. I also got hold of Scott's historical romance *Ivanhoe* which deals with the same period as that of the White Castle, near which I stayed when in England. I much enjoyed some portions of Winkelmann's works on the Art of the Ancient World, after working myself into it and skipping some parts not so interesting.

So you see I am making progress in self-improvement—even if it is the fruit of compulsion. Yet in a parasitic way, I have only availed myself of books ordered by others. Simply because those on my own list—the ones I most wanted to read—seemed never to be in the library or, if so, to have been "weeded out". Now I am engaged in making out a new list this time compiled from the catalogue itself, so that the reasons previously brought up for the non-appearance of what I wanted cannot be valid. I am curious as to what they will *now* say! In matters of this sort I am sharply pessimistic on principle and as the result of experience—a most intelligent pessimist! But in the really big things I remain, as ever, a "crazy" unshakable optimist. . . .

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *Göggingen, 23rd January, 1948*

The time when Buz was here still rings in my ears as the most beautiful tone in the music of our camp, although the parting with him, after we had been together so long, was all the more difficult. But everything has two sides, and not least life in the camp for the boy himself. It would certainly have not been a good thing for long, unless perhaps he could have gone to school in Göggingen and, what is more important, lived, slept and washed himself somewhere *else*, and not in the midst of a crowd of womenfolk, young and old. Furthermore, what can one do in the way of education when a boy's mother forbids something or even punishes him but all the time

nice kind "aunties" and "grannies" stand around pleading for the poor little fellow, or even secretly giving him his own way or pitying him because his mother's methods are too severe? vvvvvvvv.

I must tell you a nice little story passed on by a comrade "across the way" who was, for many years, secretary to Admiral Trotha whom you valued so highly. He thinks those belonging to the same branch will certainly be able to enjoy the full flavour of the anecdote. Perhaps the passage of time tends to blurr the outlines of such stories, but that does not affect the essential meaning—it may even bring it out better! Remember the Bremen anecdotes of Karl Lerb's, which I sent you in Nuremberg? Listen to this!

"Trotha tells me this," says our friend, "when we were discussing the way in which things of minor importance thrust themselves into the midst of important affairs: in the very middle of the First World War, the Secretary of State for the Navy suddenly issued written instructions that the word 'Schublehre' (slide rule) must be written in that form and not, as hitherto, 'Schubleere,' as from a certain date. I think it was 1st January, 1917. Until this date, where the word appeared in service regulations as 'Schubleere', it was to be pasted over with labels enclosed bearing the word spelt 'Schublehre'. This instruction, coming as it did in a critical period of the war at sea, filled the naval staff officers of the fleet with astonishment—a baffled state of mind followed by a hurricane of laughter. The staff got together and, after fortifying themselves with liberal doses of alcohol, they dispatched in the middle of the night a radio telegram to the responsible Secretary of State, with an order to deliver it to him *personally at once.* It ran as follows: 'Deeply impressed by the memorable instruction of date so and so, as to the future spelling of the term 'Schubleere' as 'Schublehre', the staff officers of the High Seas Fleet request a special favour, namely, permission to write word 'Schubleere' in the form of 'Schublehre' not only from the date specified, but from *this very day.*' Trotha concluded by expressing his regret that he never

found out how the Secretary took it, when he was awakened in the middle of the night, as he probably was, to receive a special telegram from the staff of the High Seas Fleet and read the foregoing text! Nothing more was ever heard about the matter."

Spandau, 15th February, 1948

Since receiving Buz's photo at Christmas and my mother's New Year letter, I have had no news whatever. Nothing has come except some books, amongst them: *Wirtschaft im Europaischen Raum* (A Study of European Economics) which, however, I was not allowed to have, as it was written from a "National Socialist" angle. Please write to mother about this, so that she will remember next time she sends books. I would ask you also not to send any books about the First or Second World Wars, unless they are more or less in line with Lichnowsky, or unless they are the products of politicians and soldiers of the opposite side (sic! vvvvv).

Recently, I read a little book by a climbing enthusiast of the second half of the last century: Barth's *Einsame Bergfahrten.* In the years before the war why did we almost cease to make any mountaineering trips—even quite gentle with no nervous strains? Our earlier trips were so beautiful: the Schottelkar tour, in spite of the "Biesterei" in the hut vvvvvvv; the Heiterwand, in spite of having to drag up three weeks' provisions; and the Hochkönig. Not to mention the walking tour through the Inn valley, from Krangbitten to Alpach, hardly to be described as mountain climbing but nevertheless unrepeatable. Of more recent excursions I can recollect the wonderful long walks based upon Obersalzberg, over Hochlenzer, Scharitzehl and Verderbrand down to the Königssee, through autumn woods with views of gaily coloured slopes and, high above in the cool air as clear as crystal, the Watzmann, shimmering in its first coat of early snow; in the distance the Steinerne Meer. The last of these mountain expeditions (for all one knows just now) was in the summer of 1939, the descent from Karli's Berghäusel, behind us bad weather gathering round the ridges of

the Wetterstein—so lovely and so moving to remember. and so strangely symbolic . . .

Last week I read Jacob Burckhardt's *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, a compilation of lectures held by the great scholar in Basel at the end of the last century. Do try to get hold of this book yourself; you will enjoy it as much as I did.

At the moment I am reading about the Saxon emperors. Before their time there was one who, not outstanding in *outward* success, was a great moral personality: Conrad the First, Duke of Franken, who was elected Emperor of Germany in 911. He overcame himself to the point of electing as successor the Duke of Saxony, later Emperor Henry the First, a man who was his strongest opponent, embittering his life. This was a unique case in the history of the Germany of the Middle Ages, so rich in cases of quite an opposite nature. And the Dukes did actually elect this Saxon, although they knew he was a man who would rule with a heavy hand, or at least with a control that would limit the independence of the separate clans —for he knew what this independence could mean, since he had himself practised it when in opposition. It was true that the Empire needed such a man to guide its fate, if it was to overcome the greatest peril threatening from the continual inroads of the Huns; and the Dukes also realized this. When Henry finally succeeded in defeating the Huns and mastering the danger from without, he at the same time created the authority necessary to consolidate the Empire from within. The thick head of the Saxon proved to be a blessing! The Frank wrote all this to HIS Lower Saxon wife—another proof of his moral greatness! vvvvvv.

* * * *

How I was always delighted by newly fallen snow! But to-day? It leaves me indifferent: ground, bushes, branches, trees, walls—all are bedecked with white, but I hardly notice them! Perhaps I do not *want* to see them, because I no longer desire to see beauty and allow my spirit to be moved by it. The protective skin round about

my soul grows thicker; it begins to develop the rings of years. *Only those who have lost freedom know what freedom means.*

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *Göggingen, 26th February, 1948*

In one of your recent letters you wrote about a book, *Königsmarck*, the first you read in England; you liked it, because you had once seen it amongst my books and felt that it formed a sort of spiritual link with me. . . . This link I always tried to maintain, when you were in England as far as possible I read all the books that I sent you from the booksellers here! What I now send is intended also to help in this link. Here we have formed a splendid literary study circle. We are immersed in Rainer Maria Rilke and, before this, we read right through Faust and discussed it, especially the second part. I am now trying to get for you the newly published two volumes selection of Rilke's works—one of the best of the new German re-issues. Then we can read together on parallel lines again! At first you will have to make a considerable effort to plough into it, because it will strike you as very strange to begin with. I approached his works through a collection of his published letters; and I read hardly anything else during a lengthy illness in the winter of 1944–45.

It is a remarkable fact that after 1945 I had the most peculiar experiences with Rilke's works and their effect on men of all the various occupying powers. Several of them, after a preliminary display of bad-mannered arrogance, were suddenly arrested by the long array of my Rilke's works, which were shelved in the room where the "interrogation" always took place. Starting in this way, some quite unusual talks often developed and turned into friendly discussions—at least in the case of those representatives of the widely different authorities interested in questioning me and who could be taken seriously. These striking experiences, which happened again and again, lead to my taking an ever-increasing interest in the poet. Here in camp I discovered in the leader of the study groups in the men's camp a highly intelligent example of the species *homo sapiens*, a passionate

admirer of Rilke, so that I went on thinking. A long time ago, when I read Sonnet XXIII in the first volume of the *Sonette an Orpheus*, I felt deeply moved, for my thoughts dwelt upon my "in Tag und Traum stets Fliegenden" (the one who flies always, by day and in his dreams).

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *2nd April, 1948*

I wrote to you in February that my case had been finally fixed for the 9th of March; then, just before it was due, it was postponed to the 23rd of March. I had no idea that my release would come with lightning speed after this date. It had been the general experience that after the hearing of a case weeks or even months would pass before release. I never thought that I had been taken into custody as a "security measure" pending investigation and was not included amongst those classed as AA (automatically arrested). Through the court of justice in the camp it was possible for my case to be settled quickly when once the German officials in control there were in possession of the relevant documents. They were then able to set me free—*without* consulting the Americans. And this they did!

All this happened in exactly twenty-four hours, so that it is only *now* that I am gradually realizing the situation—as you may well imagine. . . .

Yes, this phase of my life is over. Don't laugh, but I have a yearning for the camp and my companions there and have to get accustomed to life without that comradeship—in spite of Buz. Naturally, to have him again is so lovely that no words can express what I feel. . . .

In the camp I always had to think of you when we had good music, which was very often in the last few weeks. I was well able to imagine how deeply you were moved by the playing of friend Funk and by the music of the Englishman who played Mozart in the house where you stayed at Aldershot. I felt just the same, for since 1941 I had avoided listening to music dear to me. In the camp the concerts were compiled from the remaining records from Harlaching, and once I had to cry with such abandonment that it was horrible and

filled me with shame. But gradually the music took on a positive quality and, in the end, it became a source of inward uplift and that was all.

Spandau, 11th April, 1948

Rudolf Hess sends greetings to his wife, Ilse Hess:

Concerning this form of address—which will doubtless surprise you very much—I must mention one or two facts: letters sent to me may not contain more than 1,300 words (not just 1,200 as formerly prescribed); nothing must be underlined and no abbreviations must be used, including initial letters in place of names; signs are not permitted, even when an explanation is enclosed—this included the laughter line vvvvvvvvv. Breaches of these rules give some explanation for the non-delivery of so many letters.

Be careful to remember these rules, as I will also. I will further cease to indicate the form of address by letters but, at the same time, I do not want to write it out in full. So I am going back to the method used by the ancient Romans—as above. You can smile, and in your thoughts add, by way of amplification, what I *would* write in a private letter. You will find it easy to guess. . . .

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Keep a look-out for Schleich's *Besonnte Vergangenheit* (The Sunny Past) if you have not already read it. It is truly "sunny". I have not yet finished the book, and therefore do not know if it includes an account of his experience in lecturing to a congress of doctors on the great discovery of his life—local anaesthesia—not precisely a sunny experience! It was a contribution, however, to the theme: "The Masses and the Genius" and "Old fashioned Conservatives and Progressives". He was shouted down and made to look ridiculous: an "Authority" sought to bring him down by an annihilating speech! It was years before anyone decided to make a real experiment with his new method; and to his surprise and that of his colleagues it was established that the young

man who had been scorned was no idle dreamer, but the pioneer of revolutionary possibilities. And in this case the pioneer was not an "outsider". No! He was one of the guild himself. It was a brother scientist, one of themselves, who had been shabbily treated by these scientists! I was forced to remember the story of Semmelweiss in Vienna. He discovered the cause of puerperal fever and in his own hospital, by the simple means of insisting on doctors washing their hands before touching another childbirth case, he reduced the proportion of cases to a mere fraction of what they had been. But he was pursued by the mockery and contempt of his fellow medicals and, embittered and broken-hearted, he sank into his grave. Nor is this sort of thing peculiar to medicine or confined to persons with an inflated notion of educational superiority—non-academic "healers" and relatively uneducated persons of all descriptions can treat one another in similar fashion. In one way or another such conduct seems part of human nature: whole volumes could be filled with the most astonishing illustrations of this truth—although up to the present, so it seems, no one has learned the necessary lesson.

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Schirach, our literary historian, reads aloud to us nowadays from the *Divine Comedy* in Pochhammer's translation: it is unbelievably beautiful with the ring of the purest music; it must be read aloud to get the maximum enjoyment. Pochhammer, a Prussian lieutenant-colonel, conceived the not-at-all bad idea, after his retirement, of rendering Dante's greatest work into German stanzas, first asking the advice of Wildenbruch, who gave him enthusiastic encouragement, after seeing the first specimens. . . .

Schirach has compiled a list of the best German romances and novels, and we use this in filling our list of books wanted. . . .

Farewell! as the Romans used to say at the end of a letter!

Thine.

Spandau, 9th May, 1948

To-morrow evening will mark the seventh year that I have spent in imprisonment. When it began, I thought it might last seven hours: as soon as I made myself known to the Duke and explained my mission as a *Parlementär* (officer bearing a flag of truce) I assumed that I should be treated in the manner in which a *Parlementär* ought to be treated—even if I came as a self-appointed one. When it became apparent that I had deceived myself in this respect, I reckoned with seven days—until the matter was taken up officially.

Well! I had to learn to stretch the thread of hope, which reached out towards the day of liberty—to stretch it more and more! I did not want to return without having done my job. In the very first days, I said to one of the officers about me that the worst thing they could do to me would be to ship me off home, then and there. Thereupon the good man became "all ears" and opened wide his mouth and eyes in expectancy of the great "revelation" that the people over there awaited: namely that I had "escaped" from "Nazi Germany", with the reasons thrown in. However, he was visibly disappointed when I assured him that the object of my flight was not to practise long-distance flying and navigation, to satisfy an ambition to break through the English defence system, to enjoy the sensation of parachute jumping in Scotland or, possibly, to make an overseas trip to Portugal, all the while certain of being shot or imprisoned at home—without first of all speaking to someone in high authority in England and, at the very least, putting my suggestion before him. After the parleying was over the situation would be different; then I would myself lay weight upon my right to return home, as fitting for *Parlamentär*. At that time I had not the faintest idea of what—in any *positive* sense—could be the meaning of my being retained as a prisoner. The compass within my breast had guided me as surely as a precision navigation compass guide to the north, or the compass of my good old Me 110 all the way to my destination.

I had had an additional compass fitted so that, if the

two others should differ, the third would indicate which had gone wrong. But they all three gave the same indications with no wavering—including the fourth rather primitive one on my wrist, which was intended to guide me after my jump, when I stepped out of the parachute to make my way to Dungavel. However, in this respect also, things did not go quite according to plan; for in the struggle to get free of my 'plane—which lasted some time—I landed a couple of hours 'march from Dungavel —not to mention my leg injury.

My own personal compass did not deceive me even in the matter of the approach. I had thought out half a dozen different courses, numbered them on the map and memorized them with care, but the one I eventually took was not among these! For an easily recognized land mark when crossing the east coast, I had fixed on Mt. Cheviot, and this served its purpose. But then, unfortunately, I saw in the distance (about as far away as the Danube is from the Alps) a series of mountains emerging from the mist. A kingdom for the man who will tell me which is the right one! I snuffled the air and rubbed my thumb against my first finger, like Father Bauer had a habit of doing, and steered straight for the one that looked the likeliest. It was the right one; for very soon I could perceive a piece of land jutting out to sea and a chain of little points: the Holy Island and the Farne Islands, as I think the points are called, which I had studied on the map a hundred times at home. For this was my navigational point to which the various courses should lead. But I flew towards the Cheviot and not the islands, for between these and the mainland there was a regular flock of ships, convoyed by three destroyers in *Dwarslinie* (a loxodromic course). A charming peaceful picture but, had I drawn nearer, a hell of anti-aircraft fire would have been let loose. As a matter of fact, I never saw a single puff of smoke from an ack-ack. Everything went just as it should have gone—and not in the least as Udet had been convinced it must go! Thinking to soothe the Führer, he had assured him "in the name of the Air Force" that it was utterly out of the question for

me to reach my goal: either I would fall into the sea, because with so little practice I could not manage such a complicated machine, or I would just vanish somewhere over the ocean or, if in spite of all, I did arrive over the British Isles, it was absolutely certain that I would be shot down. And even if that did not happen, I would infallibly break my neck in trying to bale out. But, as I have already written, the Führer differed completely from Udet; he was "pessimistic" enough to feel sure that, when I had once got a thing thoroughly into my head and wrestled with it, I would not fail to carry it out. Well, he was right because he knew his deputy longer and better than any of the others—and as for the political consequences, which caused him serious anxiety, he was content to leave things in the hands of fate. Frank told me in Nuremberg that Hitler had told him afterwards that he felt I must have made such an uncompromisingly decent impression upon the English that even they would not feel able, even in the middle of a war to the death, to make capital out of my flight by issuing false reports as to my purpose—as he had expected they would do. On my part, I had assumed that this same "uncompromising decency" would be met with the same qualities. I had not calculated far enough to realize that Churchill no longer had the power to act freely or to check the avalanche, then sliding down upon us.

There you are. Those are a few of the memories from the past, touching upon the seven year jubilee of my act of "indiscretion".

Spandau, 4th July, 1948

Before I forget! Let me answer the query about the suggested visit, at once: it is meant, I know, very kindly, but I do not wish to have any visits—whether unimportant or otherwise. I cannot give you all my reasons for this decision, and some of them have already been given. . . .

You inquire about our gardening. Daily, unless very wet, we set about our weeding, sowing, planting or gathering. More than a thousand square metres of potatoes

are now in flower. In addition, we have more than one hundred vegetable beds, where we try our skill with varying success under the guidance of old Neurath. In a multi-coloured mixture, we have beans and peas, all sorts of cabbages and beets, spinach, celery, salads, pumpkins, radishes, comfrey and onions, not to forget tomatoes. This year I am not specializing in tomatoes, but in turnips and mangolds. When thinning out, I transplanted a couple of thousand of these and they really took root—to my surprise, because they were a sorry sight for several days.

I think I shall become a farmer one day, as a secondary occupation (don't laugh!) But certainly not here. For the soil of this accursed sand-box is simply deplorable. After all, what can one expect when, not so very long ago in terms of world history, the sea rolled over this spot, but not—one feels sure—the love of the Creator of all life! And on top of everything, this climate! Now it is July, yet one would like to have heating morning and evening, and the plants, no doubt, feel the same. This year we have found that the warmth coming from our dear sun is barely sufficient for one quarter of the year. I can well understand that our early forefathers including the emperors of the line of Otto and Stauffens were continually obsessed by an urge to go southwards to the Italian sun, and that, while their heads told them to go eastwards, their hearts yearned for the south. . . .

Spandau, 1st August, 1948

Rudolf Hess delivers his greetings to his wife, Ilse Hess, and his son, Buz!

He also informs you that the letter of the 17th of July arrived here, but was not handed over because of its political contents. The portion written by Buz—which, thank God, was not political but which was on the same paper—will be given me later. Therefore please take notice: nothing political, and letters from Buz to be on separate sheets! Mother makes no reply to the charge that she indulged in political matters: an expedient policy, for probably to do so would give rise to difficulties all

over again. Besides I know already what she would say were she free to write as she wished. So swallow it down, even if it wants to rise in your throat—like I do, by the cartload! We are being educated to become stoics and philosophers, whether we like it or not.

* * * *

I have come across an outstandingly lovely book: *Frührot* by the old Socialist, August Winnig. It reminds me in several ways—not forgetting the changes imposed by time—of *Grüner Heinrich.* It could stand side-by-side with the latter for magnificent clarity of language, rising to poetical heights, even if the style itself seems to be nearer to that of Stifter. I was once very anxious to see Winnig in Ley's place, for he was a man who, whilst brought up in the school of old-fashioned social democracy and becoming Regierungspräsident of East Prussia after the First World War, steadily pursued a path leading from internationalism to nationalism.

Spandau, 29th August, 1948

Your letters of August 12th arrived safely and were handed over. The ruling so far given does not allow another letter to be sent in place of one that has been stopped; for "People must be punished" (Please don't laugh!) Further we have now heard that someone has had a stroke of genius: from now on, disallowed material in letters is to be blocked out with violet ink, instead of the whole letter being withheld or returned. My memory being in such a bad state, I may be deceived, but I seem to recollect that censors in earlier days already had grasped the possibilities of this method. . . .

Don't bother too much about Buz and his schooling. To judge by the various things I have been told in the last few years, there seems to be absolutely nothing in the disposition of the little chap to give rise to anxiety. And in comparison with his general character, any school success in the immediate present, whether great or small, a little more application or a little less, is naturally quite unimportant—not that it would be wise to let him know

of these heretical opinions on the part of his father! Even should he fail in this or that examination, it would not be half as bad as if he developed into a pushful fellow in the worst sense. Meanwhile, let him be a rascal rather than a model boy always thinking about bringing home good conduct reports. . . .

I was pleased to note from his report, read to me out of the letter I did not receive, that he took part—or at least *wanted* to take part—in a ski-race; the weather, however, preventing. As soon as he can, let him begin with football in the summer—and in a serious fashion: he might get some coaching in a sports club in how to handle the ball. I once looked on while some small boys, younger than he is, received such instruction in the Munich *Jahn-Verein* and an opportunity to practise on the spot. Football remains in my memory as the best of all the sports for groups of men; but to this day I regret that I was never given any systematic instruction: in those days I dare say that sort of thing had not taken root. . . .

There can be no more exchange of thoughts for another four weeks—so far as one can speak of "exchange" and "thoughts"; as things are. My *real* thoughts are shared with no one in these days. They pursue their way within!

Salve! Yours

Spandau, 3rd October, 1948

To my mother.

Thank you for your dear greetings at Whitsun and the gift of the new translation of the New Testament. This is certainly a very daring thing, coming after the magnificent language of Luther who was himself deeply rooted in the people and went about amongst them continually, so that he could remain bound to them (the term *Volksverbunden* was recognizable although *blocked out* by the censor.) He listened all the while for the most appropriate and commonly grasped words, for imagery amongst the things most in use, and for familiar household phrases. As he said himself, one must listen attentively if one is really to speak as the people do!

Luther went so far as to substitute for flowers known in

Palestine, but not here, the names of others belonging to our own surroundings.

His translation is unbelievably powerful; one feels that he threw his whole passion and warmth into it. So much that stems from this great work has long been incorporated in our permanent speech, so that any other version must seem strange.

Nevertheless, this attempt to render the Bible into modern German is, in my view, fully successful; I admit to my own surprise, for I had not expected it could be. Admiral Raeder, who chose religious research as his special field of study, is actually enthusiastic.

* * * *

Who would assert that God's will and guidance is just and understandable, when he looks at the course of world affairs to-day and considers the fate of individuals and of whole communities? I find it impossible to avoid the belief that, side by side with God, there must exist something that is an opposite pole, such as is commonly called the Devil. This seems all the more likely when one reflects that throughout the whole of existence we find polarity: light and dark; hot and cold; positive and negative electricity; good and bad; male and female. Every now and then the Devil gets the better of things—or let us say God allows him to do so—as with Mephistopheles in *Faust*.

Is this so in order to purify human beings, to cause them to develop inward life? Not from consideration for the individual, a few are chosen to be the instruments and the servants of progress, for the sake of good and the blessing of humanity when the domination of evil comes to an end. At the same time, those thus chosen will be rewarded for the sufferings they have been called upon to endure: success for one, awareness of a great task for another, or fame in the eyes of posterity, immortality; but the knowledge of these things is hidden from the individual.

It is singular how this idea crops up with the great names of history, not only the thinkers but also the men

of action. For example, in the case of Gustavus Adolphus, whose biography I have read: he warns the people of Magdeburg to remember their own history. "That which God wills to make great," he said, "is first brought through severe difficulties by His omnipotence that His glory may be all the more manifest."

Spandau, 25th December, 1948

It is very interesting to me that what Buz regards as specially important he writes, quite unintentionally, in big letters—and more often than not in wrong spelling! There is a saying current among some people, "he writes this or that in large letters": one writes GOLD, another FOOD, a third TAKE, a fourth I, just as Buz actually does in his own peculiar manner. If all his life he goes on writing IDEAL in big letters, as you tell me he now does, he is, without doubt, on the right road. . . .

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With real enjoyment I have been reading a collection of the letters of Wilhelm Busch, that laughing philosopher who held up to his fellow men a bright mirror, reflecting much humour but not without a vein of bitter earnestness. I had not previously known that he lived in Munich for so long, and his references to the city gave his letters a special echo of home to me.

My reading has also included the biography of a most interesting personality whom I find highly deserving of sympathy: Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*, a truly outstanding spirit, far ahead of his times. That is how he came to be put to death by his king. Spirits of his type always incur the dislike of those who are interested in maintaining things as they are. They are lucky if they get nothing worse than dislike. . . .

Spandau, 23rd January, 1949

Unfortunately there is still no letter from you since the one in September. But I have long reconciled myself to these pauses and the loss of dozens of letters. If, at last,

one does arrive safely, it is by way of a surprise. In England my letters were separated by intervals of months, and then a lot would come all at once, if not in the originals, then in duplicate. They did not get lost altogether as they do now. The English would say that they had been held up in Germany as a "punishment"—but I was convinced that they were delayed in England to annoy me.

Accordingly, I begged the Swiss Ambassador to let them be sent direct to him from Switzerland and this was done, although he, too, believed that the hold up was in Germany. At least, he did until, to his surprise, it turned out that letters from Zürich took just as long to get to me as those from Germany, thus proving that the delay was in his own beloved land—in fact with the Red Cross in Geneva. *There* it was that my letters stuck for weeks and months! Even when representations were made by the Ambassador himself these had no effect. The latter, as I think I wrote before, was touchingly kind towards me. He not only came to see me several times at Mychett Place, Aldershot, which was not so far from town, but also he made the long journey to Abergavenny to see me—a matter of some thirty-six hours there and back—at fairly frequent intervals. We would have lunch together and usually an enjoyable talk, discovering many mutual friends. Amongst these was a man whom I had known when I was a boy in Alexandria. He is now in the Swiss diplomatic service, and, presumably, taking part in the endless dinner parties is one of the many duties of his occupation, and offering up his digestive apparatus on the altar of patriotism.

I found these conversations most instructive, for the Ambassador had been all over the world in the course of his career. He had represented his country in Japan and gathered a lot of interesting impressions of Japanese life and character. Together with many others, he brought me some books on Japan. Amongst these was one by a Swiss who had travelled in East Asia before the First World War. Specially interesting were his remarks on the differences between Japan and China: the former a modern

state, open to everything new, clean and full of light, yet tied firmly to its thousand-year-old traditions, to its beliefs, to the many ideals of Samurai, to the immortal charm of the cherry blossoms, half-worshipped by the people in their fêtes, preserved for ever in the decoration of vases or in inimitable brush drawings. China, on the other hand, sunk in deepest inertia, not yet emerged from the Middle Ages, from sinister superstition, still infested with robber bands on land and sea (on the inland waters, an armed government junk was necessary for protection from robbers) and with a system of justice not yet beyond the stage of horrible torture, with Mandarins regarded as semi-divine; with vast masses of people swarming like maggots everywhere, millions dying of hunger, even in peace-time; with repellent vices and dens of opium eaters —the whole picture being, in reality, incredibly like the sacred ponds of the temples, centuries or even thousands of years old, stagnant pools of slime, breeding grounds of bacteria, covered with thick films of duckweed, so that hardly a ray of light reached the water below. The Swiss writer, preserved, however, strict impartiality and made no attempt to compare the two lands in any tendentious spirit. The contrast above indicated arises purely from the facts as related and was perhaps not even intended by him. We must not forget that all this was forty years ago! Now the picture is very different. China is vastly changed: more or less by force the country has been opened up to so-called "civilization" and the benefits received have been paid for by new dangers and drawbacks. Life there will certainly now be much less interesting—and much less worthy of respect; even if it does not (as the signs would seem to indicate) seek its salvation in extremes of a totally different nature. If we can speak of "salvation" in this connection?

On one occasion the Swiss Ambassador brought me a box of paints. However, painting in water-colours is not so simple as I had supposed. Some sort of introduction is needed, I think. I did not possess even the most primitive knowledge of the subject. There was no white in the box, which seemed to me a serious lack! How was one to mix a

grey? Then I get a tube of white but it served only to produce a horrible mess! But I got hold of a book called *Painting with Water Colours* and discovered—what seemed to me most improbable—that sky-blue mixed with vermilion can produce a variety of beautiful warm, light, transparent shades. Now I understand why Goethe was so glad to have an artist friend with him in Sicily, who could initiate him into such secrets as these; and now I feel able to appreciate the work of the great water-colour artists. Once it seemed it would be so simple, lightly to sketch the lovely pale tints, the grey and pink shades of evening, the shimmering clouds—but now! Oh, Heaven help me!

Speer was highly amused to hear about my efforts, when I spoke to him of them, and maintained that painting in water-colours was injurious to the character, as it led to superficiality. But now I have been preserved from any danger of systematically damaging my character. . . .

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At Christmas and the New Year the pastor gave me some prints that my mother had sent him for me: she also wrote to him a letter which he told me was most moving. Amongst these things was a view of the Ibrahimieh house in Alexandria, one of my earliest attempts at photography. And that is what it looks like!

At one time the Führer took a great interest in views of this house, and maintained the architect must have been very capable. I showed him these pictures when we were together in Landsberg as prisoners. How often I think of those days! I know that the director "Mufti" did not appeal to you, with his cool and unsympathetic ways, when you had to go to him for your "ticket of admission" on your weekly visits to the prison. But, after all, people are what they are, and basically he was a good man and a decent fellow. What would I not give to-day for another "Mufti"!

I happened, just on the very day of my mother's birthday, to come across a passage in Kant about his mother: "I shall never forget my mother, for she planted and nursed the first seeds of good in me. She opened my heart

to the influences of nature; she aroused and widened my ideas of life; and her teachings have never ceased to exert a wholesome influence upon my life." This applies not only to the mother of Kant, word for word. . . .

Spandau, 13th February, 1949

I am still without news of you; the last letter came five months ago! With a few exceptions my comrades get their post regularly. When I made a request to be allowed to inquire into the delay, or to get inquiries on foot, I got a permit to write to you out of turn: this I did on the 10th of February.

I might add the following information concerning my letters written to you:

1. The fact that I did not write my monthly letter in March 1948 was not due to forgetfulness or to not *wanting* to do so; but I cannot tell you the real reason.
2. I had hoped to take up the matter of letters arriving here but not delivered to me, in my March letter, but this did not come to anything, because meanwhile I had been informed that they would not be given to me.

I was furthermore told that up to now two letters sent to you had been sent back. I found that Doenitz not long ago received a letter sent to him by his wife which had been sent back to her. But he *nevertheless* got it—by a somewhat circuitous route, namely, via America! It came officially—from an official organization over there. Since this was quite legal I can tell you about it, adding that this method might possibly be open to you also. You might try getting into touch with Frau Doenitz. She will presumably inform you at the same time that the organization in question over on the other side told her that, from now on, food parcels can be sent to us by this route. But—and this is why I mention it—I do *not* want any, even if it is permissible. The pleasure they might give me in a material sense would be more than outweighed by the worry it would cause. This would be true in any case, but more especially now that the means of communication

between you and me are so uncertain. Even if a parcel really came, I would have to reckon with the probability of others rotting away somewhere or other, or—what is even more probable—not either rotting or reaching me, but causing you personal loss. So I repeat what I said before: on no account send me anything to eat. Please be good enough not to do so, even should a reliable method prove available, or you should *think* it were available!

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In Gleichen-Russwurm's book *Gothische Welt*, I discovered the answer to a problem which has often been discussed, but which is now settled so far as I am concerned: "German" or "Gothic" writing was created in France for use in books written by hand as *de luxe* issues for collectors and later, after the discovery of printing, was taken up by printers as "gothique flamboyant". Coster in the Netherlands and Gutenberg in Mainz used their skill in type-cutting primarily to make primitive forgeries, purporting to be the work of master calligraphers and thus commanding high prices. Venetian printers at first took up this *lettre francese* but, finding it impractical for rapid reading, substituted for it one more suitable for daily use, the *lettera italica*, the Latin print of to-day—technically described as *antiqua*. During the Renaissance, this superseded the Gothic in France, England and the Netherlands, but not in Germany. Gleichen-Russwurm adds that "it is a most peculiar circumstance that a type of lettering invented and practised by court calligraphers for the benefit of French collectors in the Gothic period should have maintained itself in Germany and, in course of time, come to be looked upon as German, and defended and loved as national". He goes on to say that this can be explained probably by the fact that the Bible was popularized in this style of print: "the people became accustomed to it from childhood and thus learned to love it and to regard it as a national heritage, in spite of its bad effect upon the eyes and the barrier against other nations which it tended to maintain."

Recently I got hold of a study of Robespierre and the

psycho-pathology of power by D. Hans von Hentig, whom I knew in Munich in 1920. This was during the amusing period of my attempts at building and decorating.[1] I then came into contact with a certain Dr. P., a personality by no means free from psycho-pathic traits, but interesting, witty and clever: he held out to me the prospect of "tons of gold" if I would fly to Persia with him in a 'plane loaded with aniline dyes and medicines and do a bit of black market trade—for it was his belief that the Persians were thirsting for these German products. Of course, I was quite ready to go; in those days what was I not ready to do! However, the idea came to nothing so far as I was concerned. Dr. P. set off for Persia by himself without a 'plane, and nothing more was ever heard of him! It would seem likely that he was murdered for the valuable products or the "tons of gold". Fate seemed to have preserved me for something different, if not less adventurous! (You can laugh here.)

Spandau, 13th March, 1949

At this moment I hear Funk's music coming from the church—the innermost emotions of the great masters of the past transmuted into sound for us and ever present. Recently I read a beautiful saying by Beethoven: "There is nothing higher than to draw nearer to God than is granted to most men and, from this position, to radiate the light of the Godhead amongst one's fellow men."

I have only just found out that Funk, as a young man, was a pianist and gave concerts on tour. How extraordinary that such a man should, of all things, become a Minister of Economic Affairs! But even in this role as a Minister for the least inspiring of all state offices, he managed to play quite a lot on the piano and the harmonium (which is actually a little organ) to the great joy of visitors. He often plays variations on folk songs before the church service begins, and sometimes accepts ideas of this sort from us. I hummed a little melody for him with this in

[1] This reference is to my husband's activities in the *Munchner Wohnungskunst A.G.* soon after the end of the First World War—Ilse Hess.

view but after all he did not play it. It was regrettably not a folk song, but music of a more light-hearted order; and I have to admit that it was not suitable for a prelude to a church service! . . .

Spandau, 10th April, 1949

Somewhere somebody must be really ill. For not only did your letter of the 22nd March reach me all right, but also it got here before the end of the month. This is the first time that two letters have reached me, one after the other, but I am quite sure that the responsible person will soon be better again.

* * * *

Now we are getting April weather of a really classic kind: warmth and light alternate with wild snow storms and grey bleakness. The green of early spring shows itself timidly in little buds on some bushes in the garden. I detest lilac and all lovely things, as long as I find myself closed in by walls and bars. How strange a thing is freedom. Never again will I shut a bird up in a cage. And now I understand so well why the Chinese and Japanese, when they wish to show gratitude for good fortune, go to the market, buy cage-birds and let them loose. I will do this, too, one day. . . .

Spandau, 8th May, 1949

Believe it or not, again a letter from you arrived safely dated the 7th of April! The poor fellow must still be ill. Perhaps he has been smitten by the spring, perhaps his brain is affected! Even the date of handing over the letter to me was almost according to plan: on the 27th I got letter and photos. But, as both had been made known to me beforehand, I was able to enjoy a foretaste on my birthday, the 26th.

Of the photos, I like best the one in which Buz looks keenly into the distance, presumably watching the ski-ing. Yet I don't know *what* he really looks like: less so, the more pictures I see of him. He looks different in each, according

to the light, his mood and which way he's looking. Probably he has a very changeable appearance and this is not only due to the photos; his age—entering upon the teens—is one of change. His spelling, however, never changes; it is always perfectly frightful. On this point I can appeal to one of our greatest men: Goethe said to Eckermann, "Don't worry me about your blunders in spelling! I make mistakes in every letter and put in no commas." In the same fashion, he was able, when he wished, to make free and easy conversation in the Frankfort dialect he had spoken as a boy. I assume that, in the case of Buz, he can do much the same thing in respect to the Bavarian dialects which he knew as a child. And I am quite pleased that he can, provided that he can also speak good High German, especially when he is in the northern regions of our Fatherland. For there, dialect talk is taken to mean a lack of education, and is often not understood at all without an interpreter. That's where Thomas Mann annoys me—his novel *Buddenbrooks.* He brings in a real Munich character of the traditional beerhouse type—but in *Lübeck!* This Herr Permander, as he is called, plays the part of a sort of provincial clown and is calculated to give the impression that Bavaria is inhabited by semi-savages of sub-normal intellect. Yet how different is the case in actual fact! Those who know Bavaria intimately are well aware that, amongst those speaking this same dialect which seems so "impossible" to people from other parts, are found men of a vastly different stamp: the most splendid people full of down-to-earth wisdom and genuine character and, in the best types, exhibiting an unusually high level of genuine education. Yet Mann actually spent more than half his life in Munich! To avoid this sort of misunderstanding, I really think the Bavarians should try to prevent the export of such books, including not a few of Ludwig Thoma's works, for they create such a false impression on the outside world.

* * * *

At this very moment I hear Funk—that unique East Prussian character—playing variations on *Alle Tage ist*

kein Sonntag on the church harmonium. . . . Oh! how well I can sympathize with you, when you feel the tears welling up in the presence of absolute beauty, whether you wish it or not, and when even silly little scraps of popular melodies, or perhaps a flower may give rise to the same astonishing reaction. If I could have my wish, the harmonium would be used for firewood, and the sweet smelling lilac bushes, now in full flower, would be cut to the ground!

* * * *

This year I am concentrating on sunflowers and I make the whole neighbourhood unsafe and myself unpopular with my colleagues, who look upon me as a perfect pest! I plant my seeds in every corner where the sun can reach, and even the most stony spots are not spared; I try to convert them all into "productive land". One simply cannot imagine what this garden will look like when these seeds grow into huge stalks with their leaves and great shining sunflowers. To-morrow the last of my store will be used up, and then the "sunflower demon" will leave me, and all will breathe again—including myself! Furthermore, I am fully prepared for the eventuality that, before long, we may have to uproot the results of my creative efforts because the prisoners, these terribly dangerous prisoners, will be able to vanish behind veritable walls of greenery. In addition to the foregoing, I have planted not only the usual vegetable patches, but have stuck in lots of potatoes even in the sandy spots, as I did with my sunflowers. There is really something touching in seeing great plants, full of nourishment, germinating and sprouting in the midst of utter barrenness—as it were out of nothing at all!

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *15th May, 1949*

Get as angry as you like about the blossoming lilacs, my dear! At first I felt troubled by what you said, and then I really enjoyed the idea that you can get so angry. Anger is a sign of an unbroken will to live, and in between your phases of fakir-like development (as described by yourself

although in an ironical vein) it is a kind of spiritual gymnastics not to be despised. So get as angry as you like (you can laugh here!) But please find a little joy now and then: if we had had a few lilacs in our sand pits in Göggingen we should have been highly delighted. In summer we had nothing but sunflowers to give us pleasure; they would be "pinched" at night and we would decorate our poor barrack rooms with them, in spite of furious orders to the contrary from the camp directorate. . . .

During 1941 and later I was often to remember that we once pledged ourselves never to become snobs or "climbers", never to sell our birthright as idealists for the sake of external things. And I think, in this respect, we honoured our word and—as I must honestly admit—without any hardship or cause for complaint. I cannot deny with equaly honesty that the loss of Harlaching is sometimes painful to me. But that is the pain of mourning for lost beauty, for a thing that was perfect and full of harmony, for the trees, bushes and flowers planted by myself, and, in my dreams, a source of joy to our children's children. How many thousands and hundreds of thousands of grandchildren will never know the sweet sounds and smells of their homelands? So many, many people to-day have to carry the heavy burdens imposed by fate. How can it be "worth while" for me to complain?

Spandau, 5th June, 1949
(Whit-Sunday)

To-day it gives me some enjoyment to look back and remember how my father never allowed this day to pass without greeting his family with an established formula, namely: "Whitsuntide is with us—this most lovely holiday! Now where does *that* phrase come from?" And he was always happy to find that, again, no one knew where it came from! But I always suspected that my mother pretended not to know, in order to put the dictator of our domestic life in a good mood and see his cheerful smile. In the same fashion when the little demon that presides over unlucky Skat players gave my father bad cards, again and again, she managed to let him win a few

games. I wonder what goes on in the interminable card games of the next world. Do the heavenly players indulge now and then in similar manifestations of Christian brotherhood? I feel sure that the "third man" has already turned up: the second is, one presumes, St. Peter himself—to me he looks just like it, if one can go by the various pictures of him that one sees.

To return to my father: according to the most reliable accounts, not only perpetual card games but eternal hunting preserves are to be found in those realms far above the highest clouds. I can only hope that they don't have trouble with damp powder and poaching neighbours! Give my greetings to those good friends, the poor members of the "Jagawelt" (Bavarian dialect form of "hunting people") who still wander about in this world, so sorely hindered in the exercise of their natural urge —as well as to all other friends, whatever may be their "hindrances".

To you I send the ancient Roman "Salve!"

Spandau, 3rd July, 1949

To my mother.

It is now your turn to have another letter; it must be six months since I wrote to you direct. I don't really notice this until I reckon it up; time flies so quickly. That is not only the case here where several of us are together. Even in England where, apart from those guarding me, I was completely alone, weeks, months and even years flew by in the twinkling of an eye. Yet often I had not enough to read, and was forced to bury myself in my own thoughts. I learned to ponder over problems more than I had ever done before, and a great peace filled my heart. Now I am able to understand men who feel impelled to withdraw into complete loneliness, to become hermits.

This is very far from saying that I would choose to be a hermit, could I arrange my life as I liked! Just as little as I would become a market gardener; I have planted enough vegetables to serve me for all my days, I think.

As my own special charge, I have taken over the care of some 150 tomato plants. I have arranged for watering them according to the system of Musas (in the Ibrahimieh

garden in Alexandria, down by the tennis grounds) and I just stand there, enjoying the sunshine and opening and closing my little canals as if this were the most important business in the world—although every now and then the waterways change into the Rhine-Main-Danube canal of the future!

Meanwhile the sunflower seeds, which I planted in a mood of creative extravagance, shoot higher and higher; they seem to take no notice of the poor soil. It is said of them that they can grow anywhere and that they suck up the last remnants of nourishment from the soil in a quite ruthless manner. . . .

I wonder if the grandchildren all around you, as well as others, are able to find the peace and concentration needed for their school work? I was reminded of the present-day housing situation when I chanced on a passage in Kant, dealing with education: "Work demands concentration; without this the mind is distracted. Distraction leads to incapacity, superficiality and softness. . . ." The ideal thing for our schools is that the work should be confined to school hours and home-work eliminated. This ideal is the only right way in the situation of to-day, when overcrowding presses hard, just as it was in the old days of small dwellings for workers. Schirach was at a boarding school where this idea was practised, save for the *first* class: the results obtained from this school were some 30 per cent. above the average! A quarter of an hour of school time was set aside each day for the learning of words. The excellent results were very probably due to the fact that the children were kept at it with concentration; whereas when work is done at home, there is usually no supervision and a multitude of distractions and temptations. The children are thus exposed to precisely the kind of mental distraction and weakening described by Kant. Another thing that impressed me in Kant's remarks was his warning not to take the smaller naughtiness of children too seriously. There is only one case when you should say to a child: "You ought to be ashamed!" namely, when it tells lies. . . .

Not long ago I read—I think it was in Keyserling's

Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen—a passage about the magnificence of a southern garden, and I saw before my eyes the garden of Ibrahimieh, with its flowers and its scents, and all the indescribable, imponderable influences of the place: the fiercely hot "Hamsin", the cool sea air laden with salty fragrance, the winter storms, when the sea was filled with the white crests of waves far out to the horizon, the cry of gulls, the dull rhythm of rolling waves which would haunt us with its melody until we dropped off to sleep. And then there were the mild soft nights of moonshine with the ceaseless howling of dogs out in the desert—which served only to emphasize the quietness. How many times must you have sat with us children upon some bench beneath the shining star-lit night of Egypt, while you explained to us the great brilliant stars, giving names to all of them. Many of these names—Wega, Cassiopeia, Aldebaran—still have the power, when I hear them, of evoking immediately your image and that of some peaceful evening long ago. The same thing happens when I experience an exceptionally beautiful sunset, although none displays such a wealth of colours as those you would point out to us from the flat roof of our house just before the swift onset of the southern night.

A quite special charm of their own attaches in my memory to the very early morning trips to Gabari: the awakening of Nature after the dark cool night in the palm groves, the rising of the sun and, with it, the noises of the camp, the firing of guns and the smell of powder—Manzur with his barrel-loader and our retriever, Hector.

Then there were the excursions into the Libyan desert towards Mariut, in the midst of a sea of flowers during the few weeks of spring, before the heat came to draw out the last drop of moisture and bury all the narcissi, anemones, gerberae and what not that gave out colour and scent, beneath a tomb of burning sand, until the ever-recurring and almost unbelievable miracle of their resurrection in the rains of the next year. How long ago is all that!

In 1908 we travelled home: the Egyptian coast, with the pillars of Pompey, the lighthouse and a few palms as the last visible signs, slowly sank away behind us. My

father turned to me and said: "Take a good look at this country; it may be several years before you see it again!" I went to a boarding school at Godesberg. No one then dreamed how *many* years would pass by—and that we might never see this land again!

Spandau, 31st July, 1949

The greetings from Frau Winifred Wagner were a very great pleasure to me, although in my mind I was sure her attitude to me would remain the same. Please give her my greetings also. If anything had been needed to strengthen still further my firm determination to fly to England, and if anything could have done so, it would have been supplied by her—quite unwittingly. She may still remember that she once asked me in Berlin—I think in the autumn of 1940—if I could allay her anxiety over the campaign against England: did the intention not to proceed to extremes or seek the disruption of the British Empire still hold good? She hoped that the efforts to reach an understanding would continue. I reassured her, thinking to myself: if only you knew that I am just about to make a little contribution in this direction myself!

* * * *

It has now been discovered that Funk—our chief musician and at the same time at home in the philosophies of every age—is a Skat player and a most impassioned one! Once upon a time he scored what is known as "Karo ohne Elf" and still basks in the memory. You cannot conceive what this means! When one of his comrades heard of it, he modelled some little clay men playing Skat, with the inscription: "Here we play Karo ohne Elf!" It stood in a shady corner of his garden. Funk often played Skat with Richard Strauss and his intimate friend Paul Linke. It would seem that a musical gift is likely to be found in association with a Skat-playing streak—both being connected with mathematics, which indeed is often associated with great musicians. For example, Mozart, when very young, was not only a music wonder child, but also much addicted to solving self-imposed mathematical problems.

Further, Richard Strauss—so that he would not miss an opportunity for playing Skat in this all-too short human life—before beginning a concert, made it a habit to play Skat in his frock coat and white waistcoat in the artiste's ante-room up to the very last moment or (better still) a little *longer*, until the waiting public began to get restless. Then he would throw down the cards and pick up the conductor's baton: that is to say, he filled in the pauses in Skat by conducting an orchestra, until the interval allowed him to take up Skat again. Here Funk, on the other hand, fills in the intervals of studying Kant and Sophocles by reading *Ben Hur* and *Quo Vadis*—in the absence of Skat. It seems that in 1934 he met my parents in the Kaiserhof at an evening for Germans from abroad, went with them later to another place for wine, and had a long talk with my father—about Skat! To this day I cannot quite forgive myself for not inviting him and others of his sort more often for Skat and music. It would have given much pleasure to the older people and also to myself. "If only I had!" as my father would have said.

Spandau, 28th August, 1949

From Buz's letters I see he is, at the very least, well on the way to becoming a crack footballer: the "splendid shot on the left" seems to indicate something *really* great! (laughterline). Well, my Wolf, let a tremendous "Shoot" accompany you on the path to victory.

I hope and presume that, as time goes on, you will come to understand that the work of the feet and legs should be supplemented by good head work, if one is to become a "classy" player; I mean the work that goes on inside the head, and not skull bumping! But I am not worried about this. About head-work in general, your report indicates that you have ability but could do more if you put forth more effort, and your mummy tells me that you have made a praiseworthy resolution to "take up school work again" and really make an improved effort—so that I shall not have to worry about that either. You will not, I believe, let me down! What is necessary is that you should hold fast to your good resolution and prove that

you have achieved mastery over yourself. This shows whether one has character or not—and a strong *character* is just as important in life as knowledge or ability. It lies with you to develop a firm unyielding character, able to hold fast to what has been recognized as right and necessary, come what may!

If, now and then you feel that you are growing weak and that laziness threatens to interfere with your school work, try to remember what I now write to you and what I expect from you. If you can win the most difficult of all victories—the victory over yourself—you will feel you have something to be proud of; and afterwards you will enjoy football, swimming, reading Wild West stories or rounding up cattle, all the more. In a word: show that you are beginning to be a little man.

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *16th September, 1949*

Let me first of all thank you for your "golden words" addressed to our little rascal! They have borne some fruit so far, but it is only a fortnight since school reopened. I intend to write out your words and fasten them to his desk with drawing-pins, so that he may have them in front of him as an aid to this "victory over self".

Spandau, 25th September, 1949

With regard to the *Sitzenbleiben*[1] of Buz, you are naturally right from your point of view. But I look at this matter from the angle of my invincible optimism and, thus seen, it makes me feel I'm right! On the whole, I have to agree with Speer who thinks we are extremely easy-going fathers. When one of his brood brought home an exceedingly good report, he wrote telling her that she was not on any account to become a model school-girl. The success of this suggestion was demonstrated in no uncertain fashion in the very next report! The girl's mother summoned up some forcible language in which to describe the

[1] Buz had failed to pass the test for promotion to a higher class, where he had been placed as an experiment: finally he was allowed to remain in the higher class after all.

father's educational theories. What is my own position, having addressed words of admonition to the boy before I had received any indication whatever of your own quite different attitude? My advice, I am bound to fear, will be much less successful than that which Speer sent to his daughter. Imparting education by letter from a distance is far from being the right method; a mother's desire to see the father exerting direct personal influence is easily understood. If fathers were brought face to face with their offspring, they would be compelled to take their duties more seriously.

Spandau, 18th December, 1949

To my mother.

My dear mother; how often I think back to my younger days—on holidays, for example, when Funk plays folk songs, those you played on the piano for us, besides the more serious music, snatches of which come floating into my cell from the church. You were a splendid counterpart to the robust manliness of my father when in his fullest vigour—a vigour which he often used to cover up his very soft spot for us, successfully as a rule. He kept his feelings very deep down. In many things you two worked together: as models of unshakable honesty, for instance, and of faithful devotion to self-imposed duties in all things, great and small. You would busy yourself with all sorts of odd things—just to make yourself busy, because you could not endure idleness. . . .

Let us hold fast to the many beautiful memories that we can share—and not least those surrounding Christmas, the New Year and your birthday. Just this moment I can hear Funk starting up on the harmonium—Schubert's *Ave Maria.* The Mother of God is the symbol for all true mothers—for all mothers who have to suffer. How warmly I think of you and of all my loved ones!

When I write like this you must on no account think that I am getting "woach" (for the benefit of the censor and translator "woach" is a Bavarian dialect word signifying "weak" or "soft"). At this point I say firmly "None of that, Mr. Devil!"

Spandau, 12th February, 1950

There is still a head missing from my picture gallery, one which most certainly belongs to our family in the larger sense—such as Rudi and his people. I mean the "charater" and weather announcer Freiburg.

In the role of weather announcer she did her best to ensure the success of the greatest achievement of my life—even if she did so unconsciously. Or did she perhaps suspect something. Something that went beyond the peculiar "hunch" of my own people, from Buz to his mother?

As to this greatest achievement of my life, I do not see it in the mere fact of getting across without being ditched, that is to say as an aerial and navigational success; nor do I see it in the courage required to fly over water, stretching to the furthest horizon, to penetrate and land among hostile defences: no, I think it lay in the *civil courage* (a quality not widely enough found amongst us Germans) that was necessary to make the *decision* and to carry it out.

I hardly think that Freiburg noticed anything definite; for I am sure she never suspected her master and employer of being as "crazy" as all that! Otherwise, in spite of the authoritarian system, she might have made some attempt to talk him round and get him away from his "crazy idea".

* * * *

In view of the nine months of being perpetually on the alert, of repeated false starts, involving wrenching myself away from my family and then having to come back and repeat the mental torture—in view of all this, it is possible that I had become really not quite normal!

The flight and its purpose had taken hold of me with the force of a fixed idea. Anything else, I seemed to see and hear only partly, as if through a fog—for my gaze was directed, either in actual fact or in mind, upon maps of the North-west, the North Sea, or Scotland. In the end—naturally—everything turned out quite otherwise than I had expected; the compass point to give me the right bearings, which I needed so badly at the decisive moment,

was just the *one* thing missing! Yet even *that* worked out all right. I told you about it: I carried on with "Father Bauer's" system, sniffing the air and rubbing finger and thumb together—it was really a miracle.

Before taking off, I lived and moved in a world of instruments, piston pressures, detachable petrol containers, auxiliary oil pumps, cooling temperatures and radio bearings (which afterwards failed to function), the heights of the Scottish mountains, and goodness knows what besides! I wore blinkers for what went on around me in daily life, except for the war itself and the political events of the day.

But to-day I am glad that this was as it was, that I was impelled by this urge until finally I landed over there, after all the long desperate struggle against the obstinate dragon that would not let me go. True, I achieved nothing. I was not able to stop the madness of the war and could not prevent what I saw coming. I could not save the people but it makes me happy to think that I tried to do it.

* * * *

The tones of *Parsifal* drift in to me through the window, conjured up by our "Funkius" from his harmonium. The idea comes into my mind that it would be a most wonderful thing to have a Wagner opera played on a hypermodern stylised stage!

It might, for example, be made clear to the naïve members of the audience that the grey sackcloth background represents Hans Sach's chamber and not a meadow scene, by merely placing an old boot in the foreground; while the illusion of being underneath the waters, where the Rhine maidens sing as they swim, could be most deceptively suggested by a bowl filled with goldfish; and the magic fire could be documented by an oil lamp, unless one wanted to be still more modern and deposited an electric torch on the floor. And what do costumes do save distract the eye? One fig leaf per person is adequate or, if this seems a bit antiquated, a bathing costume will serve: these will be far nearer to the true primitive ideal. What is the good of all this tomfoolery with fur-lined

stagey medieval robes? And the music? Why stop at that? I hold the view that it should be very considerably simplified, if we are to be consistent. Choirs of trumpets could be indicated by little trumpets taken from the nursery, thus leaving the auditory centres of the brain free for phantasy, instead of sending resounding notes, just as they are, boom—boom—boom all through the theatre. If you are going to do the thing at all, do it properly! I at least am always in favour of drastic solutions!

Ilse Hess to Rudolf Hess *20th February, 1950*

Meanwhile the post office forms from Berlin have been returned, with the news that both the Christmas parcels and the October letter were delivered to Leonoff, who had been authorized to receive them. Therefore everything reached Spandau all right, but there remains the possibility that the contents were plundered: that is, the books, water-colours, photos, etc., were taken out on the journey, but not the letter (at least the Christmas letter which you received), and in this way the "authorized person", Leonoff, signed for what was an empty shell.

* * * *

Another letter from your mother: "Will you please send my warm greeting to my dear son. My thoughts are always with him and I never cease to plead for him."

Spandau, 9th April, 1950

Here Easter was celebrated with a gramophone concert, the records being brought by the pastor: we had Bach, a very beautiful Mozart piano concerto and Schubert's *Forellenquintett*—magnificent! Beautiful music is as if God Himself were speaking to us humans. I had the best of it, because I remained in my own "apartment", where the tone was more modified. The others, in the little "chapel", sat too near to the instrument, so that it buzzed and squeaked in their ears—the same thing happens with Funk's music on the harmonium, to which I listen in the

same way with increased enjoyment. The room which is used as a "chapel" was, moreover, not builtac cording to the laws of acoustics and music but in obedience to dictates of quite another order. . . .

Spandau, 4th June, 1950

Again, I have spent a while listening to Funk's playing. On Neurath's golden wedding day he gave us some lovely music. But yesterday he struck a different note, showing the other side of his varied personality; he related various anecdotes of his early days, before he became a prominent person. Once in the company of some friends, he visited a beer-garden where a military band was playing—he liked at times to listen to music of the authentic "boom—boom" type. There he got a bit elevated and made a bet with his friends that he could silence the band in a few minutes, in the very midst of their performance. No sooner said than done. He sat on a chair facing the musicians, pulled a lemon out of his pocket and bit right into it. The success of his plan was terrific! In a twinkling every wind instrument stopped playing—and a military band consists chiefly of these! The bet was won. But he was speedily ejected from the beer-garden.

When he occupied the position of Head of the Press Department and had business with Hindenburg, he would dish up a selection of stories from his life or from here and there, anecdotes of all sorts interspersed with discreet jokes, for the benefit of the old gentleman, in this way putting him for hours at a time into a good . . . (words removed by censor).

* * * *

We have Schopenhauer's *Parerga und Paralipomena* out of the library. How he would have delighted in the case of Frau H. v. Sch. as providing a brilliant example to corroborate his very negative attitude regarding the female sex. While, naturally, agreeing with him that girls should be trained in subordination, by way of preparation for marriage, I must say (now I speak seriously) that his judgment of your sex is really grotesque and ceases to be

normal, in common with his whole extremely pessimistic attitude towards life in general. To him, even friendships between men are almost always rooted in egoism, at least on *one* side. He means by this, apparently, that he is the exception and his friend the rule. One has to feel sorry for a man who deprives himself of the last true ideals in this admittedly so far from perfect world!

I was glad, however, to discover that Schoenhauer supports me in my contention that a man's honour can be damaged by nobody outside himself. How wonderfully can Schopenhauer curse and swear at his opponents! When he gets really angry—although he often says that a philosopher must never abandon stoical calm—he throws insults right and left, gives whole pages of digressions, repeats himself over and over again and releases floods of words—in the middle of a passage in which he praises terse and condensed writing! "Mercenary ink-slingers using the jargon of Hottentots": "Hand-workers, young fellows from the Guild of Scribblers with their dirty mouths"—that is the sort of thing! And why? Because these "fellows" use the imperfect in place of the perfect or pluperfect, or the ablative for the genitive. When this passionate Kantian lets himself go on the "Hegelei" (cult of Hegel) we get such gems as: "Professors of Philosophy and their messes of sticky nonsense", their "three pounds of brains" and their "dull stupid minds in which the problems of philosophy can find as little echo as a bell in a vacuum". Oh, how well I know these cannonades of vituperation!

What, however, is really splendid in Schopenhauer is the clarity of his exposition, the closeness of his grasp, and the beauty of his style. If a philosopher be a man whose sentences have to be read ten times over to arrive at any real meaning, in the midst of the entanglement, then he was certainly *not* a philosopher. That is why I like reading him so much. . . .

Spandau, 2nd July, 1950

I have now got hold of Sybel's *Die Beründung des Deutschen Reiches durch Wilhelm I.* Yet it actually says "by

William I". I had always supposed it was by Bismarck! Oh, how pride stoops before the thrones of princes! Even in the case of a strong national liberal, as the author proudly proclaims himself to be. However, apart from this, the book is good enough.

Do you know that you once gave me—it must have been one of the first books I ever received from you—Ernst Moritz Arndt's *Meine Wanderungen und Wandlungen mit dem Reichsfreiherrn von Stein*, in a very beautiful period edition. I once took it with me on an expedition in the mountains—together with the *Kleinen Volkswirtschaftslehre für Jedermann*, which you always hated to bring along as one of our necessities on an expedition. It makes me blush now to think that, in spite of this, I never read Arndt's book properly. Now I have made up for this and am most enthusiastic. What vivacity! It seems to have come gushing forth and straightway to have been taken down in shorthand: and what a picture one gets of Stein himself and his splendid personality!

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A few words about our letters and the censorship: from now on the term "laughter-line" may not be used in place of the old sign vvvvvvv, and all abbreviations for names are strictly forbidden. Both these things can lead to difficulties with my letters, perhaps to obliterations. As a matter of fact, several passages were blocked out in the last two letters.

To my son. *Spandau, September, 1950*

You, Rolf-Rudigar, are gradually attaining to an age when you can yourself take over something of your education: you must realize what you have to do and take a good look at your faults—nobody is free from them! And then show yourself and others that you have will-power, a will strong enough to conquer your weaknesses. If necessary, you must say to yourself: "You good-for-nothing chap—you've jolly well got to! . . ."

I do not need to give you all the details of what goes to make up a little gentleman, you know that or, still more,

feel it yourself. Above everything, it must be demonstrated in your behaviour to your mother, not only on Mother's Day, but always, on every occasion and day by day. Now and then a spirit of opposition will rise up within you, that is certain; when she has to correct you about something or other, perhaps a cheeky answer is on the tip of your tongue—stop then and think of what your father, so far away, wrote to you and of how glad he would be to be able to do something chivalrous and helpful to your mother, as some return for the ten heavy years she has had to suffer!

And even should you really think that, on some occasion, she has unjustly reproved or even punished you, that is no justification for ceasing to behave in a chivalrous manner. On such an occasion say *nothing*—but, later, when both of you are quite quiet and calm you can tell her why you felt unfairly treated. I want to tell you, further, that you can believe me when I say that to swallow an injustice silently, without flinching, although fully conscious that your conduct was completely right, can impart (to a man more especially) an inner freedom that cannot be shaken by anything. But remember, my dear rascal, that you will not fully understand *this* until you are a few years older and perhaps read this letter again.

Spandau, 22nd October, 1950

First of all, a few words on practical matters: you must not write more than 1,300 words *altogether*; apparently neglect of this rule has led on several occasions to the return of your letters; and above everything, nothing political, as seems to have been the case in your last (censored passage). And we can no longer have *any* books sent—as from now. Also no cuttings from papers. . . .

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Among our books we have one on astronomy by Diesterweg, in a new edition published by Urania-Meyer. When I was a schoolboy I had another of his books, the beautiful *Das Weltgebäude*. It shows how a little push in a certain direction at the right moment may prove the

starting point of a lifelong interest. In 1906, or perhaps 1907, a newspaper paragraph gave an account of a comet. When the night was nearly over and just before the sun came up, I saw the comet. The tail shimmered swiftly across what was about a third of the sky. Every night I got up to observe its rapid flight and its changing form. From that moment I never lost interest in the stars: while at the boarding school at Godesberg, I kept buying the little Cosmos volumes; and when studying commercial subjects in Neuchâtel, I borrowed books by the French astronomer, Flammarion. It was all very helpful towards a knowledge of the heavens and the French language, but did not do much to promote the purpose for which I was there; and in commercial book-keeping, I failed to get even the minimum number of marks required. No value was attached to my knowledge of the stars! So I had to take a special holiday course, much to the annoyance of my father, who, thank God, was unaware of the byways into which the feet of his son—destined to be a merchant and chief of the house of Hess et Cie in Alexandria—had wandered. My mother was quite pleased about the matter —apart from the reproaches which it brought upon her misguided son! She had a great love for the world of stars, with its secrets. So it was, perhaps, not only the comet which had so influenced me; there may have been a certain hereditary factor in my make-up, not forgetting that my mother had so often drawn the attention of us children to the heavenly bodies seen in the clear light of the sky above the Nile. I send her a special warm greeting, in memory of the many evenings we spent, sitting in the Ibrahimieh Gardens in the shining splendour of the southern nights.

Stimulated by the books on astronomy, I have been occupying myself again with that "sly old fellow" who so faithfully and continually accompanies our clod of earth and who, in the opinion of some theorists, will one day come crashing down upon our heads, like many of those before him and many yet to come, thus bringing about the sort of thing we had in the days of the Flood—which the dear old human race is now trying to bring about by

"power" without any aid from above! As we know, he always turns the same jolly face to us; this being quite natural, for he turns on his own axis each time he moves round our earth. All this is clear enough, but *why* it should be so is an old and much discussed problem, in which the matter of the craters plays no small part. Some believe that they are of volcanic origin; others that they are the result of showers of small planets. I incline to the latter view. Perhaps the moon-rocket travellers of the future will be able to determine that on his other side the old fellow has a face as smooth as that of a little girl!

That would indicate the rightness of my theory on why one side of him is always turned towards us. I have only one doubt: the solution which I have thought of seems altogether too simple. There must be some grave objection, since I have never read of any such suggestion. Let it be as it may be! Enjoy the great orb, free from all theory—but think of me at the same time!

Spandau, 22 January, 1951

To my mother.

Ilse writes that you were especially pleased with the reminders of our times together which you find in my letters. So I would like to brush up a few more memories of those days when we youngsters clung to your apron strings. If someone then had foretold our future, we should have laughed and thought him a lunatic. "Little Rudi" a prisoner for more than ten years and never really knowing *why*!

But let us forget all that and return to the childhood days: what a paradise it was in our garden on the edge of the desert! Do you remember how we would gather violets together and how glorious they smelled; every day we picked another big bunch with enormous flowers. In the furthest corner of the garden, by the tennis courts, where we had earlier had vegetables; that was where they grew. The passion flowers clung along the wall just behind the hedge. As a child, I found them rather disturbing; they smelled so poisonous and their forms were so stiff and mathematically precise. Growing on the arbour were

grapes that never got ripe. We kept on trying them. Sometimes we were lucky and after all did find a ripe one, but they always made us pull wry faces—a botanical riddle for which I have never up to this day found an explanation, Egypt having such a hot climate. By the arbour was a real jungle of growing things, such as honeysuckle and ilang-ilang, spreading the sweet scents of Arabia—as they are imagined to be but are really of quite a different order!

And how lovely it was on the sands in those days, before the quays were made, and where one was surrounded entirely by glorious nature where sea and desert met. For the most part an idyllic calm lay upon the water, and we could wade out to the crab-rocks. Sometimes the waves were whipped up a little by the breeze, and we had a certain respect for the treacherous currents. In late autumn the storms began and the idyllic gave way to the exciting and the immense; when mountains of spray dashed high into the air as the waves broke against the rocks in the old harbour, and the sun gleamed through the white foam. The Mediterranean, usually so blue and cheerful, turned grey or dirty yellow with churned-up sand. The gulls screamed their hoarse cries. It was to the rhythm of raging waves that we children sank into our slumbers of an evening: "Oh ye happy eyes, what you have once seen, come what may, is a treasury of beauty for ever." It gives me endless pleasure, my dear mother, that your eyes can still see the beauty of the world—and I know well *how* they see it! . . .

Spandau, 6th May, 1951

During these last few days, Mother must have often longed for the warmth of Egypt, even though in those earlier days the baking heat of summer was far too much of a good thing. The "Hamsin" even to-day after forty-five years, is a frightful memory; the burning wind blowing in from the vast oven of the desert, carrying with it sand like a dense mist day after day. You tried never to leave the house, turned the roll-shutters down, in the hope of some protection from the hot blast, sought to block up

every crevice against the flying sand—but all was in vain! The whole house was like an incubator and the all-pervading sand spread its yellowish powder everywhere and crept into everything, even our food. The visotto would grate against our teeth. In spite of it all, our father—"indestructible" he always was—felt at the top of his form and would laugh at his family. . . .

Buz will certainly not be able to imagine that I was a year older than he is now when I saw snow for the first time. It was in Godesberg, when I awoke one morning and found the whole world clothed in white; the utterly peaceful quiet impressed me most; not a sound of wheels or horses' hooves, not a single human footstep.

When we had visited Germany, as was usual for us to do in the summer, we had stayed sometimes until the end of October or even into November, and we children had seen frost flowers on the window panes, but had not experienced snow. Once coming over the Semmering, we pressed our noses against the windows of the sleeping car and saw that outside it was white but, alas, also dark; and when the day came the magic carpet was no longer there, and we were running into the warm air of the south. And another time, as we were travelling north in the spring, there lay a small drift of old snow in the shadow of a station building on the high watershed between South and North Tyrol. Out we dashed, two sunburnt children of the desert and began to throw the first snowballs of our lives; they were hard and gritty, but cold and white. That was a great experience!

To his mother.[1] *Spandau, 23rd September, 1951*

Do you remember, Mother, that once when I was at home in Lestenbach on holiday from school in Godesberg we both enjoyed a really *great* experience, watching such a

[1] Frau Klara Hess, my husband's mother, never received this letter. She passed away on 1st October, 1951. The news was sent to Spandau in a letter from his brother, Alfred Hess, which contained these words: "It was really a gentle passing from this world, as merciful as anyone could desire. She was spared any conscious farewell; and for this, especially, we ought to be grateful. . . . It would

fall of meteors as very very few people are privileged to witness. Hour after hour shining, streaming tails swept, one after the other and sometimes several together, across the sky. At that time the earth must have been passing through a congregation of meteorites in the Laurentine area—it was in August. It was such a spectacle as Alexander von Humboldt saw during his stay in South America and described as one of the greatest experiences of his life.

Spandau, 21st October, 1951

My dear loved ones,

I send my heartfelt thanks for the considerate manner in which you conveyed this heavy news to me.

So it has happened after all; that which seemed so unthinkable. Certainly I had to reckon with the possibility, but nevertheless I hoped she would stay a few more years with us and that we might meet once more—as she believed also! I am unspeakably glad to know that her disappointed hopes never reached her mind; that she lay down to rest so quietly with no struggle and no pain of saying good-bye to her children and the beloved grandchildren and to her eldest son, so far away. . . .

She will now receive that place in the heavenly mansions which she has deserved by virtue of her touching love for her family, her devotion to all that was good, her courageous endurance of the heavy burdens placed upon her from earliest youth, her unshakable sense of right, her active helpfulness, her deep sympathy with all sufferers and, not least, her loyal unity with her people.

It is a most peculiar thing: in her later days, my mother was widely separated from me in space and was, for me, hardly more than an idea; she had practically no influence upon my life and career; in an active sense she had withdrawn completely into the background. And, that not-

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have been the most inhumane thing imaginable for her to have known she was to die still separated from her dearest son with her continual faithful hope unfulfilled. Coincidence or not: at precisely the same time, ten years before (to all but one day) our father died: on 2nd October, 1941, at 16 hours."

withstanding, the knowledge that she is no longer in this world gives me a sense of irreparable loss and emptiness—the world is no longer the same. I think it will be a long time before I can feel reconciled to this loss. The presence, even at a distance, of a loved person has a matter-of-course quality; it is taken for granted, and thus one gives less attention and less protective care and love to this person than one wishes afterwards, when the unthinkable thing has happened, that one *had* given—and would now so gladly give if only one could.

Taking it all in all, the world is a very sad place, full of sorrows which lurk in the background, ready at any moment to pounce upon us and to culminate in the "awe-inspiring solemnity of the hour of death"—Oh, Schopenhauer! . . .

To his son *Spandau, November, 1951*

Have you ever, my Buz, occupied yourself seriously with the laws of Nature? How full of meaning they are! At every step one is faced with inexplicable wonders. . . .

When Kant was asked what he regarded as the greatest of all wonders, he replied: "The heavenly world of stars lying above us and the voice of conscience speaking within us."

Think a little about this conscience that is within, my Buz! Physics and chemistry can tell you nothing about what goes on within, when the voice of conscience gives you no rest because, perhaps, you did some wrong to a comrade or did something to hurt your mother—this most peculiar thing called conscience will never give up, until you have made things good again!

Nothing to do with physics or chemistry can tell you whence comes your feeling for beauty; why you are filled with delight when you listen to Mozart's music (say, the *Kleine Nachtmusic*); what it is that grips your soul when you see—as you can from your own home—the snow-covered summit of the Watzmann, shimmering with delicate pink in the early rays of the morning sun. Nor can it explain what you will feel when you make your "grand tour" and experience what generation after generation of

"northerners" have felt when they came down from the Alps into the sunlit Italian landscape; the eternal urge and yearning which—for good and evil—has played so large a part in all our German history!

How does one explain honour, ambition, and the passions—love, jealousy, contempt, hatred? What riddles are intuition and inspiration! A scientist is visited by a brilliant idea when he is still half asleep in the early morning; an engineer quite suddenly conceives the idea for a great invention. Johann Sebastian Bach sought for days to find the right end for a composition—but in vain. Then one morning he woke up with the whole thing in his mind down to the last note.

Perhaps you have heard one or other of the very beautiful songs of Hugo Wolf (Mummy was particularly fond of the one beginning "Wanderer der vom höchsten Berg in der Weite sein Deutschland grüsst"). He was accustomed before he went to sleep to read through the text of his songs, certain that when he woke up he would hit on the right melody, and he always did; he just got up and wrote it down—the divine spark had struck fire. There is only one explanation possible for these things: there is an unknown power, call it what you will, God, if you like, which sends us the capacity to feel beauty, a conscience that we may do what is right and good, which created and still creates systems of stars from primeval gases, causes ions to revolve round the cores of atoms following laws like those proper to the planets, and governs all biological development with a purposeful hand. It must be a power that rules over the whole realm of science as we know it and over much that we do not know, always furthering its omnipotent design and translating it into deeds.

The most important natural scientists of our time have also reached this conviction. At first one is not inclined to believe it, but great astronomers of our day have, as a result of their most recent investigations, arrived at conclusions which—however difficult it may be for many to accept—they are compelled to regard as proofs of the existence of a divine power. It is indeed inherently improbable

that man (of all things) with his limitations of knowledge, his weaknesses, his faults and all his human inadequacy should be picked out as the crown and summit of Being! No! There must be something beyond that, a power infinitely more perfect than man and certainly not similar to man, a reality that is not humanly imaginable. We can call it spirit, but that does not help us much —for what is spirit? We can but bow our heads in reverence before what is unknown and undiscoverable.

Spandau, 25th December, 1951

When the New Year comes the mind is turned towards the future; what will it bring? In the evening, when the sky is clear, Jupiter shines into my cell with a brightness I have never before seen.

From the chapel comes beautiful music played by Funk; then gramophone records: Beethoven's 3rd Symphony, the Appassionata, and finally Schubert's "Der Tod und das Mädchen."

My thoughts are with all whom I love, with the living and the dead. . . .

BRITONS